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ABSTRACT

This report presents the conference proceedings of a meeting held at Trinity College in Melbourne, Australia. An edited text of the keynote address, the question and answer session by Matthew Lipman, two symposia ("Philosophy, Society and the Environment," and "Talking and Meaning") and the speeches at the Conference Dinner are included. The launching of the Federation of Australian Philosophy for Children Association (FAPCA) by Susan Ryan, Matthew Lipman, and Laurance Splitter is detailed. Summaries of the work done in 41 conference workshops also are included, as is an evaluation summary. (DB)

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PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN AND THE TEACHING OF THINKING

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CONFERENCE REPORT

SO 022 349

Victorian Philosophy for Children Association
C/- Philosophy for Schools Unit, Institute of Education,
University of Melbourne

Centre of Philosophy for Children
Australian Council for Educational Research
Hawthorn, Victoria

Trinity College,
University of Melbourne,
July 12-16 1991

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PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN AND THE TEACHING OF THINKING

First National Conference: Trinity College, Parkville, July 12-16, 1991

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Friday July 12

7.45 pm ***Key-note Address: Strengthening Reasoning and Judgement***
Professor Matthew Lipman, Director, Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children. Professor Lipman will be introduced by Professor Barry McGaw, Director ACER.
Chair Jen Glaser

Saturday July 13

9.00 a.m. ***Open Discussion with Professor Matthew Lipman***
Matthew Lipman will respond to questions on any issue relating to Philosophy for Children and the teaching of thinking.
Chair: Laurance Splitter

11.00 pm *Workshop Session 1*

2.30 pm *Workshop Session 2*

4.30 pm *Reflection Groups*

5.30 pm *Inaugural General Meeting of FAPCA*

6.30 pm ***Conference Dinner and FAPCA Launch - Key-note Address:***
The Hon. Ms. Susan Ryan, Executive Director, Plastics Industry Association, and Member of the Advisory Board of the University of Melbourne's Centre for Philosophy and Public Issues; formerly Federal Minister for Education.
Speeches by:
Matthew Lipman
Lyn English
Philip Cam
Laurance Splitter
Chair: Sandy Yule

Sunday July 14

9.00 am ***Symposium: Philosophy, Society and the Environment***
Sally Richardson: World Wide Fund for Nature
Peter Davson-Galle: University of Tasmania
Margaret Coady: University of Melbourne
Brenda Cherednichenko: University of Melbourne
Chair: Sandy Yule

11.00 pm *Workshop Session 3*

2.30 pm *Workshop Session 4*

4.30 pm *Reflection Groups*

7.30 pm ***Introductory Awareness Session***
A demonstration of Philosophy for Children involving children from Balwyn and Deepdene Primary Schools conducted by Laurance Splitter.
Chair: Brenda Cherednichenko

Monday July 15

9.00 am ***Symposium: Talking for Meaning***
Philip Cam: University of NSW
Christina Slade: University of Canberra
San MacColl: University of NSW
Peter Woolcock: University of SA
Chair: Laurance Splitter

11.00 pm *Workshop Session 5*

2.30 pm *Workshop Session 6*

4.30 pm *Reflection Groups*

8.00 pm ***Plenary Session: Where Have We Been? Where Are We Now?***
Chair: Philip Cam

Tuesday July 16

9.00 am *Networking*
Meetings of State and Regional Associations.

11.00 am ***Final Session: Where Are We Going?***
Chair: San MacColl

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Sandy Yule
Chair, VPCA
Philosophy for Schools Unit, Department of Social and Educational Studies, Institute of Education, University of Melbourne

The first National Conference on Philosophy for Children and the Teaching of Thinking was held at Trinity College, Melbourne on July 12-16, 1991. The conference was clearly successful, attracting over 160 participants from primary, secondary and tertiary education. This conference allowed for collective consideration of seven years of Australian experience with the Philosophy for Children program developed by Professor Matthew Lipman, who was the keynote speaker. The Conference Dinner saw the official launching of the Federation of Australian Philosophy for Children Associations (FAPCA), of which the various State and Regional Associations and the Centre of Philosophy for Children at ACER are members. We look to FAPCA for the organization of future conferences.

This report contains an edited text of the keynote address and of the question and answer session by Matthew Lipman, of the two symposia and of the speeches at the Conference Dinner and Launch of FAPCA by Ms. Susan Ryan, former Federal Minister of Education, and by Matthew Lipman and Laurance Splitter. Other speeches on this occasion (text not available) were given by Lyn English, who co-ordinates Philosophy for Children work in Queensland, and Philip Cam, President of the NSW Philosophy for Children Asociation as well as FAPCA.

Laurance Splitter also led a demonstration session with young philosophers from Balwyn and Deepdene Primary Schools. A significant number of members of the public joined conference participants in attending this session. Despite the highly artificial circumstances, people were impressed by the educational value of structured philosophical discussion.

Much of the work of the conference was in the forty-one workshops. We are very grateful to all who offered leadership for these workshops. A written report or initial description is given for each workshop.

The conference clearly succeeded in establishing and consolidating a national network of people professionally interested in promoting Philosophy in schools, understood as a preferred strategy for the teaching of thinking and, as Matthew Lipman reminded us, the strengthening of judgement. We include a list of state and regional associations which can provide information about ongoing activities.

Financial support for this conference was generously provided by Apple Computers Pty. Ltd., by the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia and by the Institute of Education, Melbourne University. We thank these organizations and particularly the people within them who have seen the importance of improving the quality of our thinking on a national basis. We should also report that, despite the very pleasing volume of enrolments, the conference did operate at a small loss to the organizing group despite our intentions to the contrary.

The planning and direction of the conference was organized jointly by the Victorian Philosophy for Children Association (VPCA) and the Centre of Philosophy for Children at ACER through the Conference Organizing Group. The members of this hard-working group were Fred Carstens, Brenda Cherednichenko, Jen Glaser, May Leckie, Ross Phillips, Norma Pilling, Lyn Rahill, Laurance Splitter, Ros Winckler and Sandy Yule. The main administrative work of this conference was carried by ACER and we express appreciation for the work of Yvonne Allen, who bore the brunt of this workload. We record our thanks to Janice Powell and her colleagues at Trinity College for their attention to our needs. We also express appreciation for the work of Charmaine D'Souza, Secretary to the Philosophy Division (now the Philosophy for Schools Unit of the Department of Social and Educational Studies) within the Institute of Education, Melbourne University, who provided efficient office support to the VPCA and in particular to the Conference Organizing Group.

Laurance Splitter
Director, Centre of Philosophy for Children, ACER

It is fair to say that the First National Conference on Philosophy for Children and the Teaching of Thinking represents a "Coming of Age" for the growth of Philosophy for Children in Australia. 160 delegates from all parts of the country - not to mention two philosophers from New Zealand, one from Hawaii and an enviro nmental educator from the United Kingdom - dedicated themselves to four days of talking and listening, learning and sharing, puzzling and pondering.

They came from different backgrounds and they brought different perspectives with them, but they all felt some sense of commitment to improving the quality of thinking in young people. From my own point of view, it was immensely gratifying to be part of an enterprise which kept some of us well and truly occupied for the nine months prior to those four hectic days in July (with the official launch of FAPCA, I suppose those four days were a birth of sorts!). Both in the lead up to, and during the Conference, there was a tremendous sense of energy, a unifying spirit, which (in my experience at least) is entirely characteristic of those who become involved in Philosophy for Children. Of course, there were differences of opinion over this or that issue, but we did go a long way toward building the kind of enquiring community which is so close to the heart of Philosophy for Children.

Thinking back to the Conference itself, many highlights come to mind. It was an immense privilege to have Matthew Lipman with us; his addresses and discussion sessions were both inspiring and instructive. Mat does not look forward to long-distance travel these days, but he left feeling genuinely moved and impressed at what we have been able to achieve here. The Conference Dinner with its upbeat and optimistic mood; the public session which saw the Dining Hall at Trinity almost overflowlng and a group of young children who were philosophically undaunted by such a large audience; the many and varied workshop sessions which put the lie to the notion that we are on too narrow a path; the involvement of several prominent philosophers who led sessions on "Philosophy for non philosophers", the morning symposia which created more than a few sparks; the reflection sessions which gave us the opportunity to become better acquainted with one another's minds on a more intimate level; . . . these and more come most satisfyingly to mind.

If we were into quantity over quality, I would comment on how great it was to have so many teachers and philosophers interacting in so many ways. But we're not, so I'll say instead that the Conference reinforced my conviction that the unique mix of philosophers and teachers (not to mention those who are both!) is one of the great strengths of Philosophy for Children. Add to this the talents and contributions of those consultants, school principals, administrators and parents who participated, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that we managed to create something quite special indeed.

San MacColl
University of New South Wales
(Report on final plenary session)

With the first national conference and the formation of FAPCA, we look forward to the development of two strong partnerships: between the new organisation FAPCA and the Centre of Philosophy for Children at ACER; and between philosophy and pedagogy. Tribute was paid to the efforts of all, but especially to Laurance Splitter for getting us to where we are now.

Brief reports were presented from FAPCA, from the Centre of Philosophy for Children, and from meetings of regional associations on ideas for the future. There was a report from the committee on resources (from Ross Phillips, Latrobe University) and from the committee on research (from Christie Slade, University of Canberra). There was discussion of implementation of philosophy in schools and of support networks for teachers.

INTRODUCTION TO KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Professor Barry McGaw, Director, ACER

My task is to introduce the main event, so that we can hear something more directly of philosophy for children, but I want to take the opportunity to say something about ACER's involvement, and our reason for involvement in this area. Philosophy for Children is a novel activity for us. ACER is a much broader organisation than many people imagine. There is a view that, if it moves, we will measure it, and if we can't measure it, or can't currently think how to measure it, we're not interested in it. This view is false. ACER is a research organisation with a broader set of interests than educational measurement.

In 1985 we began to think about new ways of developing and funding our own research programme. We embarked upon a consultative process which stimulated a response from at least one philosophy department, that of the University of Wollongong. Laurance Splitter wrote to us about our interest in cognition, cognitive development and its implications for education. He subsequently came to a forum at which we discussed these issues more fully. The upshot was that we ended up making the connection quite formal, to the extent that the University of Wollongong lost its philosopher for children and we gained him, and established as a home for that activity, a Centre of Philosophy for Children.

The fact that a number of years later there is a national body being formed is a matter of some delight to us. It is no threat to anything we imagine we might do in the scheme of things, for there to be now a strong, national, professional body of people sharing an interest in philosophy for children. The only thing that intrigues me is that at this time, in this country, you choose a federal structure and not a national body. I predict that sooner or later you will form a national body, but I wish you well as you establish a federal body tomorrow night. So much for gratuitous advice. The thing that your emergence as a body has done for us at ACER is to provoke us now to think strategically about what role we, as an organisation, might seek to play through our Centre of Philosophy for Children.

One of the things that we are continuing to do is to build more strongly the connections between the philosophical and the psychological dimensions of our work. One of my interests in psychology is in aspects of cognition and in particular, the acquisition of expertise. In some of that research literature there has been a substantial debate about whether there is indeed anything metacognitive. I spent my last sabbatical at the University of Pittsburgh in the Learning Research Centre, where the prevailing view was that there is no metacognition, there is only cognition. One only thinks, one does not think about thinking, because if you allow thinking about thinking then you have to allow thinking about thinking about thinking, and the way to avoid that regress, it seemed to them, was simply to not allow it to start. There was research evidence, they argued, to show that all expertise is intricately bound within the domain in which it is acquired, that there isn't a way of being expert other than within the knowledge structures of the domain of your expertise. So a chemist is an expert chemist because of the way in which the chemist organises the theoretical constructs of that domain. The kind of expertise you develop there does not transfer anywhere else .

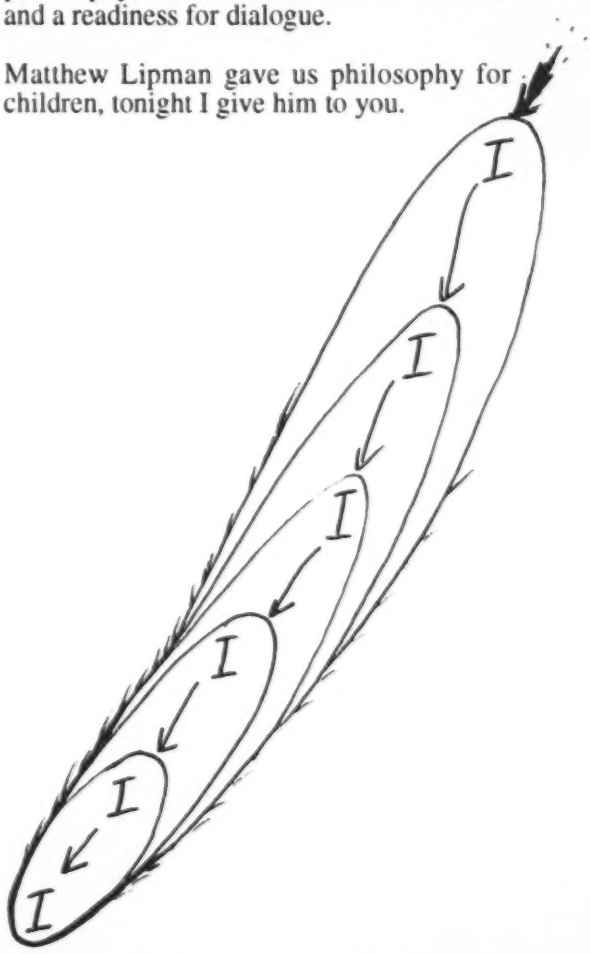
Now I lay along side that the constant claim that philosophy is the metacognitive domain par excellence, that philosophy is primarily concerned with the nature of thinking and thinking about thinking. Defining what is

good thinking, developing thinking skills, is, according to the critics, an activity without substance. In the discussions between our psychologists and those philosophers that Laurance represents and brings to talk to us, I have particularly enjoyed the debate about the extent to which metacognition has its own domain. One of the things I look forward to in the session we are about to have is some exposition about the philosophical perspective and its value across domains. In a way it challenges what is in some areas of psychological research the dominant view, that such thinking is not possible, or worse, that such thinking does not exist. It used to be that, if it was metaphysical, it didn't exist; now, if it is metacognitive, it doesn't exist.

As the next step of ACER's involvement in this, we are not only going to show that metacognition exists, but we are going to measure it. It seems to us important to try to measure things if one wishes to confirm that things that one believes are happening, are in fact happening. The constant challenge that we get from our governing council about why we are involved in this area, is this: "Is philosophy for children doing more than proselytising? Is it simply suggesting people do things, or can it actually provide evidence that those things are worthwhile because they produce observable differences in the quality of people's thinking?" That seems to me to be an empirical question. Whether measurement is the way to take the next step, is a further important question which we propose to investigate. The critics tell us metacognition does not exist. We will attempt to prove that it does by measuring it, which brings us back to our measurement origins.

It is a great pleasure to be here tonight, not just because you are all here, but because Matthew Lipman is here and I come to my main task which is to introduce him. There are not many people who can have had the experience of starting a movement and watching it grow to be an international movement, and still be there to be invited to come and preside like this. Some of you will have read the articles in the interview in Educational Leadership, and know something of that personal story of his engagement with the improvement of children's thinking through his involvement with his own children's educational experiences at school. Not many philosophers have been provoked in school, at primary level, teaching a group of children the kinds of things he thought they ought to be taught in order to see if it could be done. Then when he was told that it could only be done because he did it, that it wouldn't work otherwise, he systematically set about both training others to do it and investigating the consequences of their efforts. Out of that whole endeavour grew this programme that is now known internationally as Philosophy for Children, which is widely used throughout the world. I understand that the largest use outside the English-speaking world is in Brazil and Spain. It intrigues me that this approach seems everywhere to draw together people whose primary interest is in teaching, and people whose primary interest is in philosophy, but who share a set of concerns and a readiness for dialogue.

Matthew Lipman gave us philosophy for children, tonight I give him to you.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS: STRENGTHENING REASONING AND JUDGEMENT

Professor Matthew Lipman, Director, Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College, New Jersey

You have given me a challenging assignment. The normal thing would be to start with a joke, but I don't know any off hand. I think that humour belongs in education, and I know children appreciate it enormously. I hope that philosophy for children can provide humour in the classroom, even if I can't provide it tonight. Maybe children look at philosophy for children as one huge joke and they are beginning to suspect that it's mad, that deep, deep down there is some crazy inspiration to it all that looks beneath the surface of things, and then sees the bewitchedness and the extraordinary uncanny aspect of things that only philosophers and children have hitherto noticed. I hope we can reach out to children through philosophy and meet them in this weird area of good feeling, friendship and fun. That's what philosophy has always represented for us and children have always appreciated it.

Barry made it sound as if we have come a long way, and I think that's true. I would have it that we have a long way to go and that we are not around the corner yet, over the hump or whatever the expression should be. There are a lot of difficulties in the way of advancing philosophy for children, and I thought that if I didn't have a joke, at least I might have a little poem to share with you. It is written by Stephen Crane, a less than great American poet of the nineteenth century, talking about the path ahead. The poem is called "The Wayfarer". It reads:

> "The wayfarer, perceiving the pathway to truth, was struck with astonishment.
> It was thickly grown with weeds.
> Ha, he said, I see that no one has passed here in a long time.
> Later, he saw that each weed was a singular knife.
> Well, he mumbled at last, Doubtless there are other roads."

The path ahead hasn't been travelled on much because there is a lot of grass, each of which is a knife blade, and it is going to take a lot of courage to go down that road. But it can be done, it is not impossible.

One of the things we need to think about is not just philosophy for children, but something that's broader still, and that is what we want education to be. If we can develop a concept of what we believe education can be, an ideal, then we should think about installing that kind of course in the schools. If we could bring it off, children would be exposed to the kind of education they deserve. This would in turn give them a standard by means of which they could evaluate the education they get. At this moment, I don't think they have such a standard. In the schools that prevail in most of the world they are exposed to education that is by and large mediocre, and they don't know that it could be otherwise, they don't realise that it could be much better than it is. Until we can break through and provide a superior form of education that they recognise as quality, they are going to be very passive and docile, and so will their parents.

So, my suggestion is that at each grade level there should be a required course in this superior education, what education could be, and I would recommend that it be devoted to thinking. There are two aspects to thinking as there are to a great many other things. There is a descripive and a prescriptive aspect, an empirical and a normative aspect; I think there is room for both in a course on thinking. The empirical, descriptive content comes of course from

psychology. The normative aspect of how it would be well to think, what good thinking is, would come from philosophy. But I don't think you would want such a course to be taught in the way that traditional courses have been taught.There is an authoritarian mode of breaking the subject down into a group of parts and then teaching them in sequence, like a college Psychology I course, starting with perception and moving on to motivation and things of that kind, which is probably the dreariest sequence in all of education. You wouldn't want that. I am not denying that philosophy can be pretty dreary too, but I am saying that if you have such a course, the pedagogy has to be appropriate to the content. The pedagogy has to stimulate the very thing that you are interested in examining and understanding. You want to animate the students in the course and you want to encourage them to think better about why they are thinking about thinking.

I would say that a required course in thinking is really very much needed. You can say, "On what basis would we put it in?", and I think there are two ways. The empirical side, the study of thinking, has been neglected as a topic that children should have access to if they study how the world works, which is considered to be what they are educated in; so the study of how we think the world works is part of how the world works. Not to expose them to an understanding of how they think about the world and its workings, is simply a grievous lapse, an unforgivable and unpardonable lapse in our survey of what the world contains and what a good education should include. So simply on an empirical basis not to teach them about thinking is inexcusable.

On the other hand, you want not only to teach them "what" but "how". It is not only a case of knowing what, it is a case of knowing how. You want them not simply to know about thinking, but to do it. That is why in the case of philosophy for children, it is not a matter simply of learning philosophy, but of doing philosophy. I think that if all philosophy for children involved was a learning of the history of what philosophers have thought in the past, it would hardly be something that would be attractive to elementary and secondary schools. The idea that the course helps children to engage in philosophical thinking, to do philosophy, is I think its primary attractiveness.

I think that what we could do if we had an opportunity to introduce this required subject, this course in thinking, would be much better than say a course in psychology for children. A course in psychology for children has not been talked much about, but I think it is something we have to think very seriously about. What goes on in the mind is as important, as authentic, as what goes on anywhere else. But it happens to be closer to the heart of children's experiences because the one thing children have is their thoughts. They feel very close to their thoughts, which are precious to them; children are proud of them. They are haunted by their thoughts, they are possessed by them. This is an area of their experience in which they are just as rich as we are. They do not have any real property in the sense of owning land or houses or cars. It is not even clear that they own their toys, but their thoughts are part of them; they want to understand their thoughts and improve their thinking, which they cherish. It is simply unforgivable not to allow them to reflect upon their own cognitive practice, to reflect upon their own use of language, to reflect upon the problems they are having in thinking things out. The insistence that the traditional breakdown of the curriculum into the existing subjects is sacred and cannot be changed, that there isn't anything they don't use, that the existing curriculum is the established curriculum and cannot be changed, is the claim that requires reappraisal. I think it rests not on genuine evidence, but quite simply on established professional commitments and so on. I would hope that the growing strength of the movement such as this in Australia would represent the beginnings of a movement to demand an established position for philosophy within the curriculum in the schools.

I come back to Barry's comment about when he was in Pittsburgh; I wasn't surprised to learn what you were reporting was from Pittsburgh, which is notorious for that position, though it could just as well

have come from England or anywhere else where positivism and empiricism are rife. There is the notion that there are only particulars; there are no wholes, there are only parts. Once you deny that there are wholes, Gestalten and so forth, then you are ready to deny that there are relationships; so relationships aren't real. Now we can put Pixie onto this problem; Pixie is faced with the experience that relationships do not seem to be real, though of course she readjusts her thinking on this after a while. The strong positivist and empiricist element in psychology does have some good points. For example, at Pittsburgh, they are studying not only how we learn, but how we learn In specific disciplines. This is very useful, because it does seem reasonable that the way we learn mathematics is different from the way we learn biology and so on. They claim they are studying how we learn in philosophy and it may be that they find out that philosophy is a real subject, if they continue to study in that fashion. But I think that we cannot be content with the kind of conclusions that Lauren Resnick and her colleagues at Pittsburgh have devised and promulgated, that there are no subjects of generality, that there are no general concepts or abstract concepts that need to be studied. I think that that kind of thinking comes out of a psychological base which is itself very dubious and if they were working out of a Vygotskian base, which many psychologists now are doing, they would be more ready to say that children need general concepts as well as particular concepts. For example, to understand how causation occurs in history, how causation occurs in physics, how causation occurs in sociology, they need not only the specific understandings of causation but the general concept as well. We need to know, as Pixie would tell you, what we mean by a mammal in general and not just what we understand by particular kinds of mammals. But we could argue, as a positivist, that there are no triangles in general, there are only particular triangles; there is no such thing as "a triangle", it has to be a triangle of a particular kind. But this does not mean that the concept of triangles is a useless notion not to be studied. It has tremendous educational value as a general concept. We need the concept of flower in order to understand the rose, we need the concept of mammal in order to understand the hippopotamus. We need general concepts, and to deprive children of access to them on the grounds that they don't exist, that they are unreal fictions, seems to me a terrible blunder from a pedagogical point of view, to say nothing of a psychological point of view.

If we have a course of thinking, naturally I would recommend philosophy for children as a candidate for the offering of such a course. I think it has a good track record for filling that kind of role because I think that with regard to the improvement of thinking, to teaching how to do it and not simply teaching about it, philosophy can offer help particularly in the areas of reasoning and of judgement.

Now reasoning is familiar enough. Philosophy has, as a sub-discipline, the area of logic which, I assume, has a normative value. It sets up criteria for valid inference, for truth preservation in arguments. It offers us rules for the conducting of successful research and successful inquiry. I refer to logic as the whole field of logic and especially to informal logic, of which I think that children are very much in need, and in which they are very much interested. I am assuming that reasoning is familiar enough, although I can't explain why it has been so singularly dropped from the educational process while grammar is there. Grammar is, to me, so much weaker in terms of its contribution to children's understanding, in terms of its provision of meaning, compared to what logic provides. Logic helps children draw inferences and find assumptions and coordinate their understandings in ways that are very essential to the establishment of meaning or to the preservation of meaning. I think that not to teach good reasoning, not to acquaint children with what is involved in reasoning well, is a sign that we don't reason well in our educational decision-making.

On the other hand, take judgement. It is much less familiar than reasoning. People don't talk much about education for judgement. But I would say that we have to do something about education for

judgement and a course in thinking should be the arena for such a provision. The thing about judgement is that it has never really been an area in the way that logic has. In other words, judgement is not an area of philosophy in the way that aesthetics is, or ethics,or metaphysics, or logic or epistemology. There are epistemological judgements, yes, and metaphysical judgements, logical judgements, but judgement is not a subcategory of philosophy the way logic is. On the other hand, judgement is not found just in philosophy the way logic is. Judgement is found in all fields. Now if we look at where judgement is particularly stressed it is in practical areas of application of knowledge and not in the more theoretical areas where adequate knowledge seems to be so important a criteria. I am talking about the split between the more academic kinds of educational understandings and the professional fields. In a professional field like medicine, law, architecture or engineering, it is not what a person knows that particularly defines her as an engineer or an architect, but how judiciously she uses that knowledge, what kind of judgements she makes in her field. We go to an architect because we recognize that his or her judgements are excellent for an architect. The importance of judgement is exemplified in professional fields. If teachers want to be considered professionals, as I suspect most of them already feel they are, then this will hinge a great deal on the cultivation of their pedagogical judgement, so that they become respected for their pedagogical judgement the way engineers, architects and doctors are respected for their judgement. That is a key area for professional acknowledgement. I think that teachers generally do what they are trained to do. One of the criticisms of them is that they don't deviate from their training. As long as that prevails, then you don't have the kind of independent judgement that is to be found in these other professional areas. There needs to be the cultivation of creativity in judgement, of independence in judgement, of a sense of the importance of making one's own assessment, one's own evaluation.

When we use a rule and follow it automatically and give a subject a certain predicate because that's how it is classified, we are exercising a type of judgement that is more or less mechanical and not very respectable. We look at the kangaroo and say it's a rodent because there is a rule covering that, though we are still making a judgement. On the other hand, there are so many situations that are blurry and confused, where the concepts are ill defined, yet decisions involving judgements have to be made. An example is the question of the classification of the mongoose as a mammal or a non-mammal and the decisions that have to be made of value; "Is it a good thing of it's kind?" "Is it a vehicle and is it a good vehicle?" "Is it a watchdog and is it a good watchdog?" Decisions constantly need to be made in the form of judgements and it seems to me that if the schools don't provide this kind of experience, this kind of learning for children, then how can the schools be equipping those children to be citizens in a democracy? If the children don't get preparation in judgements, then they will not have the judgement to vote intelligently or be reasonable parents or be judicious as consumers or as husbands or wives. It seems to me that we have a tremendously important role to play in the formation of strong, healthy judgements among children so that they can be better parents, better voters, better citizens. I think we have to do it in ways that are not simply good for instrumental reasons, or good because they produce good results; we have to do it in ways that the children who are engaged in this treatment will find pleasant, fun, amusing, delightful, and enjoyable for its own sake.

Philosophy is neat in this regard because it is so full of quirky examples; philosophers keep turning things around, turning the subject over and over again and looking at the different facets in a level of detail with which most people would not bother. The interest of philosophers in language is one of the things that impels them to do this. We do this in Harry Stottlemeier, for example (Chapter 5), where the kids in the class discover that there is a distinction between differences of kind and differences of degree; some differences are kind differences (really conceptual differences) while some differences are simply

differences of degree. The difference between differences of kind and differences of degree is itself a difference of kind and not of degree, which is a meta-level of understanding of that distinction. So it is a distinction about a distinction and kids enjoy that. But then the illustrations begin and they find counter instances, which again they enjoy because they know you shouldn't confuse these things, but in language we do. We know that being married and being unmarried is a difference in kind, not a difference of degree. So I might say to Jenny about some people we are looking at, "Are they married?", and she says "More or less"; and it's funny, because we are treating a difference of kind as if it were a difference of degree. Or conversely, you may say to me "Do you play tennis well?" and I say "I play". I don't want to treat as a difference of degree what to me is better phrased as a difference of kind, meaning that I can barely be said to play at all, so that the question of playing well does not arise. It is this kind of turning things over and comparing with linguistic usage and then re-examining things which makes philosophy so much fun for children because it is inexhaustible.

Reflecting on kinds of judgement, not in any serious philosophical categorisation, we could simply say that there are two kinds of judgement: there are judgements of the world, including judgements that are appraisals or evaluations of the world, and there are judgements that are primarily expressions of the self, expressions of the person. Both are aspects of judgement and maybe if I give a little listing you will see what I mean by this distinction.

For pronouncements upon one's world, where the judgement represents a statement about the nature of things, you get items like a contrast of differences, a comparison of similarities, a discernment of relationships, a definition of boundaries, a determination of relevance, an appeal to criteria, an evaluation of worth, the weighing of alternatives, the establishment of reasons, the ordering of priorities and a description of responsibilities. You can go on and on with matters that need judgement. The boundaries have to be established, rules and guidelines have to be provided, which all requires judgement. All the phases of inquiry are phases that require judgements to be made, either about the subject matter or about the nature of the inquiry that led to the subject matter.

On the other hand, there are judgements that have a pronounced expressiveness which are revelations of a person's perspectives. They are pronouncements of meanings or disclosures of assumptions and so forth that reveal something about the person. These are areas that I think we are going to have to follow up and make sure are in a course on thinking because if the course on thinking is to strengthen judgement then we have to know all the areas in which judgement can be strengthened.

If you examine the philosophy for children curriculum manuals for the various novels, you will see that, with few exceptions, they are filled with questions that have no answers. This is an indication that we are serious about strengthening judgement. If we had provided answers then you really don't need to make judgements; you just look up the answers or train the children to give the right answers that are in the text. But if there are no answers in the text, it forces both teachers and children to make judgements and that is one of the cardinal merits of this approach.

Also, in a course in thinking such as philosophy provides, you have exercises that compel the weighing of alternatives, the deliberation that precedes judgement. You ask questions like "Is it possible for a person to be both kind and cruel?" "Is everyone you like your friend?" "Can you feel sorry you did something without feeling guilty you did it?" and conversely "Can you feel guilty about something without feeling sorry?" "Can you know something and not believe in it?" I think kids enjoy questions like these. These questions are not easily answerable; they are very demanding and challenging when you try to take a class through them. So let children evaluate comparisons such as are to be found in analogies. The evaluation of analogies is an excellent way of getting children to strengthen their judgement. There are thousands of analogies in the curriculum, as examples which are offered

as being of uncertain value; the challenge is to assess them as good or bad or mediocre.

Love is to hate as pride is to despair
My mind is to my brain as light is to a lightbulb
My thoughts flow in one direction the way a river runs in one direction
The driver is to her car as a rider is to her horse
Blood is to the heart what air is to the lungs

Here relationships are being compared with other relationships, because an analogy is a relationship of relationships. To see the rightness or the justness, the aptness of these comparisons is a matter of judgement which calls for sensitivity, for subtlety of appreciation and the deliberation that is very important for the improvement of reasoning.

I am not going to argue any further for a course in thinking. I would suggest it as a move that needs to be discussed with authorities in various school districts and with various governments. I would hope that if they move affirmatively and accept that kind of proposal, that philosophy would be the most likely candidate to perform such a role.

Questions

(As not all the questions could be heard on the tape, this is an edited and selected version).

"In assessing the success of teaching philosophy in your way, do you have to commit yourself to using certain measurable behavioural objectives?"

You have put your finger on one of the most vulnerable areas of what I have been talking about, which is "How are you going to test for judgement?", because your very test will be of dubious judgement. People will criticise every item of such a test as indicative of very poor judgement; they will say that the correct answers are not the correct answers, and so on. It simply cannot be made a cut and dried test. To my knowledge there is no test of judgement but experience itself. There is no marketable instrument that I know of which is a test of judgement. So to argue for the importance of judgement and at the same time to admit, as I do, that there is no test of it, does seem to leave me in a very weak position.

"Are you saying that there are two types of judgement instead of a continuous spectrum? You have spoken of judgements which involve conclusions and of judgements which involve aesthetics and taste. I think it is very much the role of philosophy for children to value both of these areas."

It's not just aesthetics and it's not just matters of taste. But you are right if you were to say that it is not in accordance with any simple rule that the judgement has to be made. Rather there are judgements of appropriateness in a given context where there is no way of being guided by a regulation, an ordinance or a guideline. You have to make your own decisions. This is what doctors and jurists are faced with every day; there is no law on the books that exactly fits the case. It is not clear what you are to do but a decision has to be made; judgements of that nature, which Aristotle describes in great detail, are very important. Such judgements may be the majority of the cases. We can only educate for them by having students make such judgements, by exposing students to situations where they have to make their own decisions. This can be done within the framework of the school without forcing children out into the world to make judgements in real life; they can be made within the boundaries of the school because judgements are not actions. They may be the link between cognition and action, but they are permissible within the school context.

"You have been showing that children benefit from philosophy; does the converse follow that philosophy benefits from being done by children?"

I would say yes. Philosophy benefits from being done by anyone. Philosophy is independent of age; it doesn't matter whether it's being done by children or grandparents, or by ancients or moderns or whatever. It is done by people who are interested in doing philosophy.

"Adults have an overgrowth of mental tools and concepts from our immense machinery of language. Philosophical inquiry among adults often proceeds with difficulty because we are immersed in so many ways of thinking. Children sometimes get to the point much quicker because they are working with simpler language."

Yes, I think you are right that many of the basic terms that philosophers use are very simple words like 'fair' 'good' 'right' 'just', and children use those words too. They are very important in children's vocabularies, even in children just learning language, and they are very important in philosophical vocabularies. There is a large overlap. It is possible for the children to state important questions with an economy of verbiage; they have not yet learned the terminological affectations that philosophers in universities have developed to slow down their cerebrations.

"You mention a little bit about the children growing up to be happier adults. My experience in the classroom is that they become disenchanted. We looked at some of the propaganda associated with the Gulf War in a class with older students, for instance; they found it quite disturbing and I don't think they became happier students. Sometimes the disenchantment through philosophical inquiry can be deeply disturbing for students as well as for staff members."

I suppose that there are unmaskings which are disturbing to people and not all the terrors of the world probably should be unmasked. Maybe there are times when they can be ignored. You don't have to be under a compulsion to demystify everything. But there may be some aspects of the world where it is important for us, as parents, to unmask certain things that have otherwise not been really examined. That is why Socrates talks about the unexamined life that is not worth living. There are so many areas that require examination and are dangerous not to unmask, where the lack of scepticism is dangerous to all of us. So I think that the disenchantment that a person may feel in discovering how much propaganda and lying was occurring on one's own side has to be weighed against the reality situation of what is being permitted if you don't examine it through press investigations, through appropriate textbooks, through the teachers encouraging the children to talk about it. Look at the pains that we suffer because we have hidden these things from ourselves. We have all sorts of scandals now in our society which are due to the fact that there are things which we don't want to talk about. As long as we keep the attitude that we don't discuss these things then all sorts of coups, misplacements of trust and scams happen at every moment because we have not taken them seriously and been properly sceptical.

I think that it's not all fun and games; there is a serious side to it too. Maybe Socrates is usually interpreted as exaggerating when he says that the unexamined life is not worth living, but how can we fail to reflect on our own practice in life and not feel that we are irresponsible because of this failure? How can we not help children reflect upon their practice of life and then feel that we are innocent when they get themselves into all sorts of jams and scrapes because they never thought? We let them go out into the world impulsive, ignoring possible consequences of what they do, bigoted, mechanical in their thinking; we have not encouraged them to be more critical and creative in their thinking, and then these disasters occur and we feel innocent. It wasn't something we did or failed to do - but it was.

"Is part of this disenchantment due to the feeling that the students have that they are powerless to do anything about large issues such as the Gulf War? How can philosophy address this sense of disempowerment?

You do see empowerment in the philosophy classroom; part of it is that they see their own cognitive skills working. Their self-esteem goes up because there is something in themselves of which they can be proud. The other empowering factor in philosophy classes is the sense they have of greater solidarity with their classmates. Philosophy enables them to feel that they can do

intellectual work together with their classmates and not in competition with one another; they can co-operate cognitively and not always be told to do their own work where they will be graded through comparisons between their individual performances. We don't sanction the use of grading in philosophy courses. We say that if you want to measure the impact of the programme, then measure what happens to the children's performance in the other subjects, not in philosophy. The children who don't get philosophy stay at the same level and the children who do get philosophy significantly improve in their social studies, languages, history and so forth.

I think the solidarity with their classmates is something that they value tremendously because you are putting them in a face to face relationship with their peers. This is not the kind of relationship that you have here, in this room right now, with your peers; you are sitting faces to backs and there is a weakening of solidarity when you are seated in this way. Of course you could not be put in a circle very easily here. But in the classroom, the face to face community, the exchanging of perspectives and views and opinions, the reasonings that go on together, the collaboration in tracking down the scent of a new idea, following the trail wherever it may lead, all this gives a sense of being together with one's colleagues that adults get when they are together with their equals. It gives them the sense of satisfaction from being in a situation in which they are respected for who they are. It is something that children so sorely need.

"I would just like to say that there is a film on Matthew Lipman in Britain called "Socrates for Six Year Olds" which shows this empowerment and not only the solidarity. It goes back to the point about children being empowered by their thoughts, which are the only things that they have. They have no money or possessions or stake in society. But the power of their expression, their thinking and their argument shows them that they have power, not to dominate adults, but to be equal with adults. There is a story in that film of students who had done philosophy in the classroom going home and, in very difficult and stressful situations with neighbours and with welfare payments, helping parents to solve the family situation by the power of their arguments. That is what empowerment may very well do."

Yes, thank you.

"You talked about philosophy children being judged in terms of improvements in other subjects; has there been any measurement of children's social wellbeing improving? If a child is having emotional problems or social problems, does the study of philosophy help these problems?"

There have been some small individual studies of children with emotional disabilities taking philosophy and improving, but they are so few and far between that they are almost anecdotal. I think they are suggestive taken as individual phenomenological experiences. There is a sanatorium in Massachusetts for adolescent schizophrenics. They have one psychologist for every two students, and the psychologist is also a tutor. Philosophy was introduced because the students were near rebellion; they were bored and they felt they weren't getting anywhere. I think they felt that the psychologists were only interested in diagnosing them and performing therapy with them. So when the philosopher got there, they began to have a field day. Now their identity problem, as the psychologists would call it, became the philosophical problem of identity. It no longer was only their personal problem. Suddenly it wasn't "their reality problem", it was reality as a problem. There is now an annual philosophy prize at that school for the student who is best in philosophy. The school saw it as good therapy.

"Do you find that any dilemmas arise with children from what they actually do in class and the expectations of their own culture?"

I don't know whether to take credit for it or not, but we don't hear much about that. It may be that there are conflicts which we don't hear about, but I like to think that if you improve children's judgement, then they will have less battles at home rather

than more. In the absence of information here, I maintain the hope that they will learn to be more discreet, less provocative, less combative, and that they will negotiate with their parents more effectively than they did before.

"But something like their religion at home may not be something they can negotiate about."

You seem to be sceptical about my view that the children could deal in a spirit of compromise or judiciousness with a religious problem at home. But it is quite possible that they would begin to look at their religious differences with their parents in the same spirit that they begin to understand, say, that their parents speak in a language other than English. That's simply a fact of life that they are going to live with; religious differences may be analogous to such linguistic and cultural differences. It is not that the students are changing the views of their parents, although that could happen, but that they may listen more and begin to understand, and respect, why they think the way they do. I think that this happens in the classroom community and transfers to the home situation.

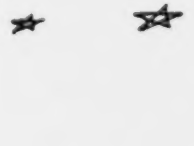
"It seems to me that children often need their illusions."

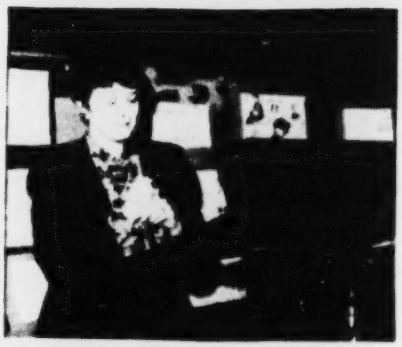
Do you really want to say that children need their illusions or do you want to say that children need ideals? If there was a little footbridge near the house that was unsafe and the children had the illusion that it was safe, I would want to unmask that illusion. I wouldn't want to feel that I was depriving them of something that made them happy, because they might someday try to walk over that bridge, due to their illusion that it was safe, and it would collapse. This could apply to sex and to many other areas where there are illusions that can be very dangerous. Ignorance can have a very high price. The satisfaction of being ignorant about things, of being shielded from certain kinds of knowledge, of having illusions that are deceptive, that can come at a very high price.

But I don't see any problems with the cultivation of ideals and I think that this is the value dimension that we really need to stress. When you engage in the philosophical discussion of concepts such as health, truth, happiness and justice, you are also discussing values. You don't just discuss pure concepts that have no value. We need to cultivate the examination of the values by which we live; each of these values has an ideal side and a practical or concrete side. For example, the value of health is an ideal, something to be aspired to, something to strive for and look towards as a fulfilment, but there are also concrete manifestations of it in the form of nutritious food, which is a value because it moves us in the direction of that ideal. Philosophy can be a big help in getting people to understand what they are seeking in their lives and what practically will contribute to the achievement of those goals.

"As a follow up to that, are Santa Claus or Superman ideals or illusions?"

I'm not sure that I would classify them as either. It is a philosophical question as to whether those two categories you name exhaust the possibilities. It is not a forced choice that you are giving me; I have options. I think we would want to reserve a decision in favour of some other alternatives. When you say you believe in something, you may mean you believe in the existence of something or you may mean that you believe that something ought to exist. If you say, "I believe in women's rights", you probably mean that you believe there ought to be women's rights, whether there are or not. We would have to examine whether Santa Claus was something that does exist or something that we want to exist or to bring into being. Bringing Santa Claus into being might mean a redistribution of the world's benefits, where Santa Claus is understood to be a symbol for a kind of distributive justice that should prevail in the world.





ADDRESS TO LAUNCH THE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN ASSOCIATIONS (FAPCA) AT THE CONFERENCE DINNER

The Hon. Susan Ryan, Executive Director, Plastics Industry Association, Advisory Board Member, Centre for Philosophy and Public Issues and former Federal Minister of Education

Those of you who happened to watch the recent "Yes Prime Minister" program that dealt with education and the lack of prime ministerial control thereof, may wonder why I, as a former Commonwealth Education Minister, would want to return even briefly to the "no win" portfolio.

As I sat on the sidelines watching Jim Hacker PM vent his outrage and frustration as he realised that he was totally powerless to do anything about curriculum, teacher selection, teacher training, organisation of schools, entry criteria for students, and just about anything else that has to do with the school system, I felt stirrings of familiarity and sympathy. State Ministers of Education of course are a different and much more privileged category, they actually run things, but Commonwealth Ministers for Education in Australia, like Prime Ministers in Britain, have what can be summed up as all responsibility and no power.

Well, maybe it's not quite as bad as that. I can look back with satisfaction on some landmarks: the Participation Equity program, new schools for Aboriginal children in remote areas; Austudy for disadvantaged secondary students; Key Centres for Teaching and Research and the institution of discipline reviews in universities; the expansion of higher education places by about 40,000 without moving into 'user pay' mode. I do in fact feel a great deal of satisfaction and a great sense of privilege that I was able to have some effect on improving education for Australians.

But Prime Ministers and Commonwealth Ministers aren't the main players. The people who have the real power, and who are the central agents for improvement and change, are those in the classrooms and those who directly support classroom teachers. I would like to offer to all of you here tonight my appreciation and gratitude that the teaching profession and those who support it with research, are committed and brave enough to look at a new way of improving education by the introduction of the Philosophy for Children program. I am excited by this approach, hence my presence here tonight.

I was persuaded to accept your invitation by the strength of the idea of Philosophy for Children. Like anyone who has been close to the education system for a long time, and I might say, like any parent, I have had my concerns and reservations. Although many aspects of education, in both primary and secondary schools, have improved enormously in the last generation, some lack of substance, particularly in primary years, has been worrying. The Philosophy for Children program seems to me to go to the essence of what education is about: to enable children to think critically, to question, to pursue, to organise, to argue, to understand and to tolerate different approaches. It seems to be about introducing a system for asking the right questions, the fundamental approach of philosophy.

I don't believe it is ever too early to introduce students to critical thinking and evaluation of information, ideas, images and attitudes. This is particularly so in an open, democratic, pluralistic society such as Australia is and I hope will always be. Australian society poses particular challenges to educators. In our sort of society education will always be controversial because it will always be

caught up in the changing aspirations of the community, in the changing expectations about the relationship between education, the economy, social mores, multi-culturalism, the environment, equal opportunity and indeed every powerful new idea Australia generates.

Not only because of social change, but also because of the fondness of education administrators for structural change, education will always be controversial. Here in Victoria for example we have seen almost continuous change to the structure, organisation and assessment methods for secondary education. The VCE, in place fully this year for the first time, is only the most recent in a number of changes. It is of course no less controversial than the various arrangements which have preceded it, and will no doubt be modified in the years to come. Has there ever been a time when the 'Letters to The Editor' column in 'The Age' has not included some burning educational issue?

A particular social phenomenon which puts education in the eye of the storm is the changing structure of family and the moving away from traditional family authority patterns. The more anxious parents become about their parental role, the more they seek to have this role taken over by the education system. This adds considerably to the enormous professional burden teachers already deal with, but I see no way out of it. It is my continuing experience that anxious parents want schools to do what they feel unable to do. There are, of course, many relaxed and confident parents whose expectations of education are more focused.

I would suggest that all parents, whether they are totally relaxed about the education process or whether they are insecure and anxious, should welcome the Philosophy for Children program. It promises to improve the quality of education dramatically, much more dramatically than, for example, the recent fashion for filling primary school classrooms with personal computers. I don't underestimate the importance of introducing young children to new technologies but I am much more excited by the idea that the fundamental purpose of education can be tackled in a systematic and intelligent way through the introduction of philosophical methods into the classroom.

I know that this program is not home grown. It started in the USA and has an international following. I would suggest however that the unique characteristics of Australian society make it particularly appropriate for the Australian education scene. First we are, to repeat a cliche, a multicultural society. This is not unique. Many societies throughout the world have contained within them a variety of religions, cultures, races and other identifiable minorities. But in Australia a higher proportion of our inhabitants are members of minority ethnic or cultural groups; Australia has embraced this diversity and made it a matter of public policy to be supported by educational, language, legal and other programs, rather than letting the cultural market place impose some hierarchy of importance on these differences.

As well as being multicultural we are democratic, open and pluralistic. Not only do we accept and recognise fundamental rights for all groups within our society, but we also assertively protect the rights of any particular group to maintain its integrity even when it challenges the values of other groups. I doubt that many teachers around the world face the same complex issues of multiculturalism and pluralism in the class-room as our Australian teachers, particularly those working in the inner city suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney, or the fast growing outer suburban areas which house many groups of recently arrived migrants and refugees.

The introduction of a program of Philosophy for Children into this exciting but difficult environment must be valuable. The ethical and value issues can not be put to one side until students reach some level of maturity. Those issues are there in the classroom every day and they need to be dealt with. Philosophy provides a sound educational approach.

Linked to our status as an officially multicultural society, is our history as a

relatively new society. Leaving aside our 40,000 years of Aboriginal heritage, which, tragically, has not been successfully accommodated by the education system or Australian society in general, we are a new society. What that means for education is that there is no established core of knowledge of literature, history, science, which is accepted throughout the society as essential for all children.

I speak from personal experience at this point. One of the projects I was most pleased to have implemented was the review of Australian Studies for Australian schools and higher education institutions. In carrying through that task I encountered enormous conflict, criticism, factionalism and downright scepticism about the essential proposition which was that students in Australian schools and universities should learn about Australia in a broad and systematic fashion across all subjects. If the central powerful institutions of education have no agreed position on teaching Australians about Australia, those arriving from other cultures have a huge challenge before them. Again, Philosophy for Children must be able to pose questions that will elucidate the Australian experience.

Perhaps I sound a little too enthusiastic about a program to which I have just been introduced. I do have some reasons for optimism. First, you are very well placed. The Australian Council for Education Research is a reputable and successful body. In my many years dealing with it I have never had cause to change this view. It has provided high quality research and conceptual underpinning for some of the best things in Australian education.

The Centre for Philosophy for Children has a distinguished Advisory Board. Again I can make that comment from personal experience in the case of most of the Board members. We all know that in education, politics or industry, it is the calibre of the people involved in an idea or program that really makes the difference. You have a good team there supporting you.

When I looked at your current program one project particularly recommended itself: the program for children in areas of socio economic deprivation. All of my working years I have been frustrated that the opportunities, experiences and stimulation our schools have been able to make available to middle class children have often failed to reach the disadvantaged. With high hopes, committed teachers and even from time to time, adequate resources, outcomes for disadvantaged children have often disappointed us all.

Need this be so?

Let me present a couple of snapshots of Aboriginal education. I was visiting schools in North Queensland where I was told of the immense problems of integrating Aboriginal children from the reserves (as they were then) into formal education. I was told of their health problems, which were considerable, of the cultural gaps which were vast, but especially of the difficulties caused by the apparent lack of capacity to cope with Western European models of learning and information exchange. All of these were genuine problems. After my school tour, I dropped into a local milk bar in a small town. There were the same children, who had been shy, inarticulate and sadly subdued in the classroom, absorbed in the most sophisticated space invaders games. They were successful, outgoing and having a great time. This alien Western technology was no problem to them at all. They were champions.

On another occasion, I was in Broome with my fellow Education Ministers, and visited a number of schools in the remote Kimberley region. Again, despite dedicated and careful teaching, the children were shy, passive and basically unresponsive to what was being provided. Back in Broome I went to visit a camp for children who had come in from the outlying areas. Accompanied by video, they were performing the latest versions of rap dancing from New York city; they were performing with skill, enthusiasm and total assurance, that would have been hard to duplicate in Central Park itself. They knew all of the words of the songs, they knew all of the references, they knew all of the stars and I reckon their choreography would have won them a place in the New York

City Ballet.

Of course teachers know that you cannot make simple translations from what kids can do outside to what kids can do inside the classroom. But these examples say something about the essential capacity of disadvantaged children and the importance of a system of liberating that capacity for use in formal learning. Philosophy for Children might be such a system.

My role tonight is not to persuade you to undertake the task. You have already decided to do that. My role is not to suggest that education systems throughout Australia should incorporate this exciting new program. The range of participants here and the support of the program by ACER suggests that will happen. My role perhaps is to say, congratulations for the adventure you have embarked upon and my very best wishes for your success.

Matthew Lipman

I am very gratified to see the work that you have been doing with this programme to move it on. I have confidence that you will take it as far as you can and I think you will see that the world is watching, at least the world of philosophy for children. I know from the other countries I have visited and within the United States, that we are all very much aware of what you are doing here, the strength of your organisation and the deep commitment of your individual members and the ground work that you have accomplished. On seeing this programme, it is clear that we are moving ahead and you have gone beyond what any other organisation throughout the world has done. There is a depth of professionalism in the spirit that I have found here, a sense of community throughout the whole group. There is no self-consciousness to that depth of commitment; you seem to go on ahead no matter what the obstacles are.

I was thinking to myself, "Do Australians always have this confidence?" That made me think back to about six years ago, to the first workshop that we had, which included people who knew what they were about. They didn't have any illusions about philosophy for children; they knew it was going to be tough. They were devoted to it and had a deep intuition about their capacity to succeed. That is present here too. "When did you feel," I asked myself, "the same sort of thing about children, that they had the capacity to do philosophy?" It surely must have been well before starting to construct a curriculum. I thought of one incident that I will mention. About thirty years ago, eight years before I met Harry Stottlemeier, I was a visiting professor at St. Lawrence College. On the psychology faculty there was Professor Rudolf Arnheim, a highly respected critical Gestaltist who was very much interested in the parallelisms between the subject and the way in which our thinking reflects our behaviour.

We were walking down a path one day and talking about this and I said, "Rudi, something happened the other day which is a good illustration of this. My two year old son was taking a bath and said, "Dad, would you hand me my pyjamas?" I said "Sure" and I handed them to him and as I did I noticed they were inside out. He took them and with a glint in his eye and a sly grin said "Ha, jypamas." Rudi just stopped and stood still. Good illustrations of a theory are rare and this one was just perfect to illustrate what he was trying to get at. To me, I think it was a turning point. I had been for years interested in children's art and I thought here is a dimension of childhood power and creativity that is completely missed by the people who think that children begin with intellectual weakness and then gradually mount up to higher and higher echelons of strength and understanding. In the case of art, they begin quite early to demonstrate tremendous mastery of colour and form and then gradually disintegrate. But it is never mentioned by Piaget and the others who are so busy convincing us how incapable children are of humour, incapable of originality, incapable of reasoning.

I do want to come back and tell you how warmly I wish you success in these uncharted waters that you are getting into. The ground is uncertain, but there is a thrill, an excitement, there is a sense that this is virgin territory. There is a fresh, vibrant air

here which is wonderful. I'll go back to the United States and tell them what a wonderful time I had.

Laurance Splitter

Now it's my turn - I've been waiting so long for the others to tell their stories..... When I look back on my time as a philosophy student and teacher, I find myself wondering just why I was so turned on by this complex and often frustrating discipline. It is true that, like many others here, I have always enjoyed asking questions (giving opinions too, come to think of it), especially questions of the "why" and "why not" variety. You may be familiar with a Peanuts cartoon which pictures two of the kids walking to the movies. One says to the other: "How many times did you have to nag your mum before she let you go? I had to ask 'Why not' 25 times before she gave in."

My parents used to tell me that "why" is a crooked letter that can't be made straight. I think that I decided subconsciously to punish them by becoming a philosopher! (They got their own back by proudly telling all their friends that their son was studying to become a physiologist!).

I now understand that my parents' response to my interminable "whys" and "why nots" derived from their conception of parents as being under pressure to answer whatever questions their children would ask them. One thing I have learned through my involvement with Philosophy for Children is that the curiosity and wonderment displayed by children when they ask questions (at least sometimes!) is more likely to be damaged than nurtured if those in authority always insist on actually answering them.

Coming back to my own second order wonderment at why I enjoyed philosophical wonderment, I have never thought of myself as a creative or inventive person. And yet there was, and still is, the strong feeling in me that when I was thinking through the problem of other minds, or of whether numbers really exist, or of what the hell Kant meant by "the synthetic unity of apperception", . . . whether in isolation or in the company of fellow flounderers (that's "flounderers"), I was indeed creating something. That no matter how derivative or confused my own thoughts might have seemed to my teachers, no one else in the entire history of humankind had ever thought exactly those thoughts or had exactly those ideas. I suppose I like to believe that all children could experience this sense of creativity about their own ideas.

These reflections are connected to something quite fundamental about philosophy itself, namely that the real joy, excitement and intellectual stimulation lies in enacting or engaging the discipline - in doing it - rather than (merely) learning about it. I should add that those of us privileged to have witnessed children doing philosophy are well aware that this principle of enactment or engagement in the discipline is precisely that which makes it so exciting for them.

Now I anticipate someone saying "Yes, but isn't it equally true of all the disciplines that they are better practised than learned - or rather that true learning comes about through the practice?" And I agree with these anticipations. But let me come back to the real world for a moment - let me remember what it was like to stand up and give a philosophy lecture to 100 or more first year university students. Lectures are notoriously described as places where the notes of the lecturer pass to the notes of the student, without passing through the minds of either. And yet I really did think (was I that naive?) that the enactment principle was actually practised in my classes by the students, that is, that by talking to them and verbalising the arguments or puzzles that were going on in my mind, I was somehow stimulating them to enact the same arguments and puzzles in their minds.

I say I thought this even though my illusions were shattered every time I would ask a question of a student, or vice versa. Then it would hit me that what the students were actually enacting skimmed right across the surface of the deeper puzzle to their real interest and focus, namely: "What do we need to know (= remember and regurgitate) in order to get out of this alive?"

Well, of course, in what I've said so far, I have committed the cardinal sin of overgeneralising. We all encounter students, at school and at university, and of course at home, who can and do pinpoint an issue with an incisive question, who can and do marshal reasons and arguments in support of their views, who can and do self-correct (and see this as a way of growing, not of backing down) - who, in short, can and do think for themselves. But I still wonder whether anything I did as a teacher really made a difference to them. Perhaps it is a characteristic of academics (whose teaching skills are more a matter of pot-luck than good management or good training) to love their discipline to the extent that their own performance and mastery of the subject matter becomes all-important. I suspect that my standing up in front of a class and enacting a fragment of philosophy for my students was something of an ego trip - it made me feel good. If they became switched on, it was because I had switched them on, rather than because I had established an environment in which the subject at hand might switch them on.

What have I learned from Philosophy for Children? Suffice it to say that it has turned my self perception as a teacher upside down, because it forced me to realise that I was capturing my students' interests by the strength of my own personality, via the "charismatic method". And yet how hard it is to give that up - to transform oneself into a "Socratic gadfly" who insists on throwing the charisma back into the class even when they want to keep the spotlight on the teacher. (Of course, I haven't really given it up. I still take the easy way out and try to win over an audience by force - when I'm giving an after-dinner address for example).

At least I can say, as someone who went back into the primary school classroom after an absence of some 22 years, that working - indeed being - with children has the effect of making one a little more humble. They tend to wear their ideas on their sleeves, so that you don't have to extract them like teeth (the ideas, not the sleeves, as Pixie might explain). And so I found myself actually listening to what they had to say because it really was interesting. Not having yet learned the game of "guess what the teacher wants to hear", they would say things that any thoughtful adult really did want to hear!

So, where to from here? I'm known by my friends as someone who regrets the past and fears for the future, so forgetting to live for, and enjoy, the present. But I'm learning, I'm learning. In between the traumas of organising this, our first national conference, my colleagues and I have had time to feel rather pleased with ourselves. Surely your interest and involvement is a sign that Philosophy for Children in Australia has really arrived.

But, I ask again, where is it going? (See - fears for the future). Is this the big splash that dissolves and dries out after a while? I think not. There are too many dedicated people committed to keeping the stream bubbling and flowing. But of course, there are questions and challenges, and I shall close with a glimpse at some of them.

I wonder, can we really convince the community-at-large that Philosophy and the Teaching of Thinking can make a difference? - they complement what is happening already (in the sense of adding something crucial that isn't already there, without posing a threat to what is)?

I wonder, can we, ourselves, as a network of communities of inquiry, find the precarious balance between quality and access, so that all those who have something to offer can become involved without undermining the integrity of either the children or the discipline of philosophy and cognitive excellence?

And, I wonder, can we, in a country which seems sometimes to revel in things mediocre and mundane, persuade those around us to revel in thinking - and in excellent thinking at that?

I wonder, yes I do wonder. But of course that's what Philosophy for Children is all about.

REFLECTIONS OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR

Sally Richardson, World-Wide Fund for Nature

(This is an abridged version of her speech made from a tape recording)

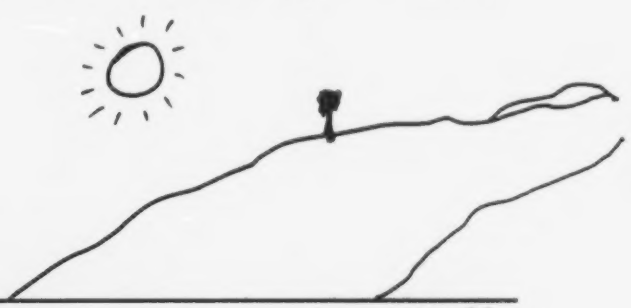
Why have I, as an environmental educator, come to a philosophical conference? Because I see the humanly generated environmental problems as symptoms of faulty thinking and faulty citizenship. I note, for example, that we tend to look first at the polluted and not at the polluter. I have recently been involved in a study of Scottish Higher Education in which we looked at the course descriptions of all subjects which relate to the environment. We found that the overwhelming focus of these studies was in the 'clean-up' disciplines rather than in the preventive disciplines. Product life cycle analysis, for example, brings preventive choices into view. I am therefore trying to bring the focus of attention onto such 'givens' as that we are a part of nature and not somehow above nature. Yesterday, I was delighted to hear the discussion on criteria. If we can establish criteria for what will count as solutions to environmental problems, we may be able to develop such solutions and eventually succeed in changing our behaviour.

How can a person like me, working in one Education Department with a staff of twenty two, seek to influence an entire nation in its environmental education? We seek to have input at every level of the influence pyramid. We sit on government committees. We work with curriculum bodies for schools and higher education courses. We also work with the National Union of Students, so that the influences will come from below as well as from above. In the media, we have a relationship with a body called Television Trust for the Environment who have the capacity to distribute documentaries free to ninety countries which could not otherwise afford to buy these films.

Our aim is to establish models of good practice which are transferable. We look for the multiplier effect, which involves creating materials which can be taken away and used by other people. We also use the diffusion effect, which assesses which people transfer ideas most effectively. We have measures to see how far an idea travels in a given period of time. We have found, for example, that primary school children are one of the most rapid diffusers in society, as are tertiary students. Secondary students are less effective diffusers of ideas.

We are interested in the spread of knowledge, the development of skills and the formation of attitudes. We are interested in behaviour, commitment, action and follow-through and in reflection on all these areas. You can see how Philosophy for Children is a model for dealing with all these concerns; we think it is a further developed model than any that we have met elsewhere.

To conclude, there are three words that I try to remember. One is paradox. I find that we can learn from the opposite of what we believe to be true. Despite the value placed upon expertise by society, there is value in naivete which I find paradoxical; the naive person has a place in our society. For example, the hollowness of, or flaws in, some of the 'truths' of our society can be spotted by young children. The second word is paradigm. Somehow, we need to shift the world view that we currently own; it is therefore very helpful to find out how paradigms have shifted historically. Some paradigms have shifted permanently and not reversed. The third word is politics. The World-Wide Fund for Nature does not subscribe to a political party because we want to have access to all the parties. Nevertheless, if we are to move from a clean-up mentality to a preventive approach, the political arena must be amenable to appropriate public education. We are promoting a thoughtful and philosophical approach to the environment and not simply more 'clean-up' work.



THINKING ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Peter Davson-Galle, University of Tasmania

I don't wish to offer any substantive views on the issues involved in Philosophy, Society and the Environment. Rather, I would like to sketch briefly a framework of ideas which ought act as a structure within which to think about the issues.

Most issues that arise within this title's scope are value-judgemental ones; decisions are being sought concerning what one should do (or what others should do). I shall limit my remarks to such value judgemental matters.

My judgement of those bits of the public debate on the environment that I have observed is that it is largely conducted by fools or rogues. Fools if they really believe that the issues are as simple as they profess and the path of right conduct that obvious, rogues if they are more intellectually sophisticated than that but pretend to their audiences that the issues are not murky and complex. Dogma and rhetoric seem to rule the debate yet with but minimal intellectual effort and honesty they need not.

In what follows I shall, as fellow philosophers will be quick to note, simplify matters greatly. I am aware that some of the remarks I make below are philosophically controversial but must remain content with noting that this is, after all, a short talk/paper and remarking that I feel that I can defend the following at length on demand.

Any decision about the morality of anything is either one that one can advance reasons for or not. If one is advancing reasons for one's moral judgement about (in our case) the environment, then the first comment I wish to make is than any such set of claims advanced in support must contain some further, deeper, moral principle or other.

For instance, if someone says that Bloggo's forest ought not to be clearfelled because it is the only known habitat of the green-

nosed numbat, a species close to extinction, one does not yet have a satisfactorily explicit case against clearfelling Bloggo's forest. It is implicit, to be read between the lines, that the speaker values such numbats' continued existence in some way but it is obscure just what the nature and extent of this commitment is; it is also obscure why there is any such commitment. Still, I trust that it is clear that some sort of valuing of numbats must be going on for, without some deeper principle like: 'having green-nosed numbats continue to exist is a good thing' being operative, merely noting that the logging will wipe out their only known habitat is morally neutral; advancing the deeper principle answers the question: 'so what if they are wiped out?'.

I said that the deeper moral principle was, as it stood (and only implicitly "stated") both vague and itself open to the challenge: 'why is saving numbats a good thing?'. I'll defer comment on the former and speak to the "further justification" demand. Again one might dig down to yet deeper reasons and again those deeper reasons had better contain a deeper moral principle.

One can continue with this, but not indefinitely. At some stage one must arrive at moral views which are, if you like, bedrock. That is, in response to challenges like, 'but why do you hold that other species have as much right to exist as humanity?', the answer might be: 'I just do'. So, a way of picturing things is that we all make a large number of particular value judgements about various situations, actions and so forth. The moral justification for these draws upon rather fewer moral principles which might themselves rest on yet deeper principles and so on until some few (or even one) bedrock principles are

reached. Call this layered network one's framework of moral values.

I'd like to remark on the above that, first, not many people have a very clear understanding of their own value frameworks, far less those of other people. Uncovering the deeper moral agenda served by some particular value judgement is not a well-practised art in our society. Thus disputes can be superficial or based on false hypotheses about others' (or one's own!) deeper "driving" values.
Second, when one uncovers one's own (or others', for that matter) value framework, it is likely that some of its elements will, at first glance, sit uncomfortably with one another. In short, following the making explicit of one's own value-framework, some critical review of it, some settling of priorities, some self-critical reshaping and adjustment will likely be in order (such a critical examination can profitably occur in company - enter the so-called community of inquiry!). For instance, our above environmentalist might not just favour numbats' survival but human happiness and these, arguably, might be in some tension. So, a good deal of discussion among initially disputing parties can profitably be spent in mutual (and self) exploration of value-frameworks and their apparent connection to the issue at hand.

Third, say that the parties in the dispute/discussion have their value-frameworks in at least initial "good shape" (fairly explicit, value priorities sorted out, etc.). How might discussion proceed? One might be able to persuade the other parties (or be persuaded oneself) that the connection from their value-frameworks' deeper layers to the stance they are taking is not as it initially seemed, so that, on more rigorous analysis, even by appeal to their <u>own</u> values, they ought not be supporting what they are supporting.

There are various ways that this might happen but I'll just mention one: connecting the issue at hand to some deep commitment that they have via some way unsuspected by them yet which leads to a judgement different to their present one. One common way for this to occur is for an unrealised fact to be put on the table. (For instance: 'you do realise, I trust, that the pancreas of the green-nosed numbat is the only known source of vitamin PQ, the base for the synthesis of the drug which is the only known cure for Harbinger's disease, the main killer of pre-menopausal women in western societies?'). Often, the fact that most people have more than one "bedrock" moral principle, or deep commitment, and that the prioritisation of these can be hard to sort out, allows challenges that appeal to these tensions to unsettle a disputant's conviction on an issue.

Of course this sort of mutual (and self) critical probing of stances and supporting reasons and objections is "part and parcel" of a community of inquiry. Its cost is that it can be difficult and even painful to do (what if, after years of chaining oneself to numbat threatening bulldozers, one becomes of the view that, on closer scrutiny, the fate of the green-nosed numbat isn't as important as one had taken it to be?). But, if one can manage to cease to think of a critical discussion as a form of combat, the merit of engaging in such a process is that one's judgements and proposals for action have their best chance of reflecting what one most deeply values.

My fourth comment is to note that even the most admirably rational and intellectually honest of discussions among disputants is not guarantied to resolve disputes (though it will resolve, or dissolve, more than one might think).

Some of these intractable disputes will be due to value principle clashes (though not all; some will be due to factual disputes where "hard data" is absent). What happens then?

One important input to working out "what happens then" is, I would suggest, one's views on what a moral value judgement or principle is anyway. What sort of claim is it when one says that the species of green-nosed numbats should not be eliminated or that human happiness is more important than the survival of other species?

To continue oversimplifying, two main theories about the nature of ethical or moral value claims obtain. The first holds that the

universe contains not only common or garden facts (like those science tries to ascertain) but also, in some sense, moral facts. That is, there are objective truths about what's right and wrong just as there are objective truths about the chemical composition of things. Contrarily, one might conceive of morality quite differently, so that goodness and badness (like beauty) are "in the eye of the beholder" and not part of the fabric of the universe. On this view, to say that wiping out numbats is bad is no more than to signal one's displeasure at such an act (and perhaps to signal one's wish that others not so act, one's willingness to intervene, or whatever). Call these two theories 'moral realism' (goodness is a real or objective facet of the world) and 'moral nonrealism' for short (respectively). There are, as you might know, various subvarieties of these views and a sub-discipline of philosophy (meta-ethics) devotes much philosophical sweat to their careful articulation and critical analysis. I wish to ignore these subtleties here because, for present purposes, these two broad camps will be "fine-grain" enough.

Now, back to our disputants and their un-rationally-resolvable disagreement, based on different values they subscribe to at a deep level (or different priorities among them). It would seem that, were moral realism to be true, our parties would have an "in principle" resolution to their disagreement. There will be a (moral) fact of the matter as to whether one ought wipe out the green-nosed numbat or not. But even if there is such a fact of the matter (and non-realists have doubted this, suggesting that such facts seem mighty queer beasts which are too queer to countenance) how do we know what the facts are? There is, of course, debate among philosophers concerning this issue of access to any putative moral facts but suffice it to say that, despite the archaic title 'moral science' to label the discipline of ethics, nothing like a parallel to scientific investigation seems available for the ascertaining of the moral laws of the universe (even allowing they exist). I suggest then that our disputants, even if moral realists, have no way of working out who's right.

Things look worse with non-realism for, on this view, it's not as if there's an external court of appeal, the world, that (even in principle) determines who's right. No-one's right in any sense beyond that set by some individual's moral framework. Yet just because a moral non-realist accepts that his views reflect his subjective preferences and not some objective moral order of things doesn't stop those preferences extending beyond his own conduct to that of others. Thus two non-realists, Jack and Jill, can be in moral dispute as to how Jill is to behave.

The upshot of all this is that whether or not there are moral truths, "bedrock" disputes of the sort we're considering are not just unsettleable, they are disputes that should give us pause for thought before action. One classic response to intractable dispute is to resort to force to get one's way ('I've tried to make you see reason but ....'). This might be apt but it is worth at least pondering upon such force's use if one accepts that one is either (as a moral realist) enforcing one's mere unwarrantable hypothesis as to what the moral facts are, or (as a moral non-realist) enforcing one's personal whim or fancy (however deeply felt).

In summary, critically exploring one's values, and those of others, in an intellectually open and honest way will dissolve many disputes and pinpoint the focus of disagreement for those that remain; and reflecting upon the nature of moral claims and their possible status as knowledge ought at least to challenge the almost "holy war" character of many environmental disputes.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Margaret Coady, University of Melbourne

The seventeenth century philosopher, John Locke, saw the philosopher as a person "to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing ground a little and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way of knowledge". In the late twentieth century, unlike the seventeenth century, both clearing the undergrowth and putting out rubbish are morally dubious ecologically speaking.

I want to suggest that the philosopher is involved not just in clearing the ground and putting out the rubbish, but that the great philosophers also put forward theories about the nature of human beings and how they should relate to one another. But first some of the undergrowth questions:

1) What is an empirical question and what is not? The connection between the depletion of the ozone layer and the use of aerosol sprays is an empirical question to be solved by looking at the facts. Of course not all empirical issues can finally be solved; the facts may be too hard to find. Some questions may be empirical but cannot yet be resolved.

   The statement that it is a good thing to preserve an endangered species is *not* an empirical statement though there may be empirical elements in the justification of it.

2) How should we go about justifying value judgments about human beings' actions in the environment?

a) We could argue that human beings are the most important beings in the universe and therefore actions are right or wrong depending on how they affects humans' interests. On this view it would be wrong to destroy the last waratah on earth because the waratah is a plant of great beauty appreciated by human beings. Questions could be asked here too about the interests of future human beings.

b) Some argue that we can justify human actions by whether they maximise pleasure and minimise pain. On this view the beings whose interests are being considered could include animals as well as persons. So even a small amount of logging in a remote area which does not adversely affect humans may be a bad thing because of the distress it causes to lyrebirds.

c) Others argue that *life* in itself is valuable, so that any unnecessary taking of life, whether it be animal or vegetable, is wrong. We may need to kill at least vegetables in order to survive ourselves, but this is not wanton destruction. On this view, wanton killing, whether it is of lyrebirds, waratahs, ants or viruses is wrong.

d) Still others argue that we are all, humans, plants, viruses and so on, insignificant in the perspective of the total biosphere. The central "wrong" is any action which threatens the ecological balance. On this view the death or loss of rights of a human being is not a high priority, nor is the suffering of individual human beings or the destruction of a few plants. The continued existence of the total biosphere is the good to which all others must be subservient.

The undergrowth philosopher will look at what can be said for and against these points of view, whether the arguments put for them are sound, whether the points of view are mutually exclusive, whether they cover all possible cases and so on.

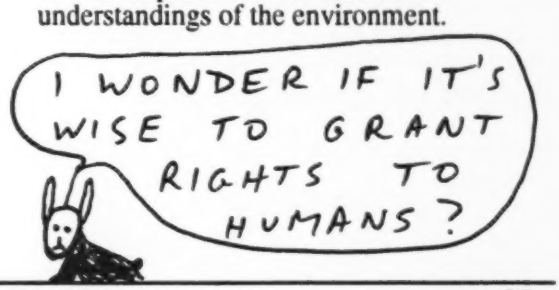
Apart from the undergrowth philosophers there are those philosophers who have put forward more extended theories about the nature of human beings and how they should live. John Stuart Mill, the nineteenth century philosopher, who wrote about the extent and justification of the state intervening in the life of the individual and whose views are still leading to reforms of the laws on sexual morality in Australia and elsewhere, and John Rawls, whose theory of justice is so influential, are two prime examples of theory-building philosophers. Within the environmental area, the Deep Ecology movement has at least the beginning of such a theory (though in some ways the movement is anti-theory) and philosophers in Australia and elsewhere have been very much involved in its elaboration. For this movement the survival of the biosphere rather than the good of human beings seems to be the ultimate value. Since the Deep Ecology movement is more a political movement than a fully worked out theory, different arguments are used to suit different purposes, and there does sometimes seem to be inconsistency between different expressions of Deep Ecology.

However there are a number of values which recur in the different expressions of the movement. These include biospheric egalitarianism and a rejection of the idea of economic growth. Biospheric egalitarianism involves giving respect to all natural objects; these natural objects include not just living beings but also landscapes, water systems and so on. Commitment to biological egalitarianism does not mean that humans cannot use these natural objects, but it does mean that humans must not interfere with these objects except to fulfil the most central needs of humans. Just what these needs are is often left unspecified. One of the main concerns of the Deep Ecology movement is the way economic systems seek to maximise economic growth. This economic growth is incompatible with environmental survival. Again the theory of Deep Ecology is incomplete in this area. What is lacking is a political theory about how this radical change in economic viewpoint will be achieved. Much has already been achieved through education to change lifestyles in environmentally desirable ways, but we need to ask whether education can bring about the whole revolution, and if it cannot, what the alternatives may be. It is with regard to these considerations that some political theory is needed.

There is an analogy here with some feminists' arguments against pornography. These feminists are right to point out that much pornography contributes to a kind of cultural pollution in which women are dehumanised and therefore perhaps more likely to be treated offensively and even raped; in the same way many Westerns and the Dirty Harry movies, which depict violence as a way to solve problems, are another ingredient in this pollution and may well lead to increased violence in society. Granted all this, it is nonetheless unfortunate that some feminists, from the best of motives, are contributing to the climate of censorship, for censorship, almost by definition, gives more power to those in power. Those of us who are concerned about the powerlessness of women need to look to such values as the value of free speech and promote those exercises of free speech aimed at changing the political and economic structures which have subordinated women.

The success to date of the ecological movement has depended on the exercise of individual freedoms, including free speech. But the deep ecologists are asking for a more fundamental change than that sought by the feminists who want to ban pornography. Since human freedoms rank very low in the values espoused by the Deep Ecology movement, is there a danger that the deep ecology principles will be put into effect by totalitarian means?

In the face of this danger, philosophers need to play a role not just in looking at the arguments adduced but in constructing political theories which can take account both of important values and of new understandings of the environment.



PHILOSOPHY. SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Brenda Cherednichenko, University of Melbourne

My main interest is in primary education and how philosophy can bring greater quality to primary education. Having declared this bias and heard some of the big issues and questions, I will develop my ideas of the topic Philosophy, Society and the Environment.

Environmental studies (or environmental education) is today a popular and topical aspect of the primary school curriculum; it is very often the theme through which many aspects of language, social education and personal development are embraced. Unfortunately, *doing* environmental education as a means of *doing* social education does not always work. Whilst many of us have the best of intentions and may indeed address the skills of social education, I wonder how well we are preparing children for the changing world.

Currently, working as a teacher-educator, I am aware of a number of questions in relation to education about the environment.

* Do we fully understand the ideas and concepts we are presenting to children about the environment?
* Have we thought about the issues, asked questions, explored the possibilities ourselves? Environmental studies presents the learner and the teacher with very hard questions.
* Is it appropriate to talk of world pollution problems, forest depletion in South America, and the greenhouse effect with children when everything we are told about teaching and learning indicates that children should be able to relate closely to the work? Can children really relate to these issues?

There can be danger in the terror that these issues can raise for people not empowered to act against them. As well as the rational fears aroused by these issues, children often misinterpret information. The resulting terror is a real concern for parents, teachers and children.

What is an appropriate way to introduce children to better understandings about their environment? I suggest that through developing children's ability to think critically and creatively about *their* world we get to the heart of the bigger issue of saving the planet.

If our approach to curriculum is to develop in children the ability to wonder and question, examine, assess, problem solve, relate and act then we are truly empowering children and consequently the wider group of which they are a part is also influenced positively.

The development of a community of inquiry is an effective model for the delivery of such a curriculum. Within the community of inquiry, as the name implies, inquiry is fostered, a sense of wondering is developed, the imagination is nurtured and confidence and self esteem blossom. These are the resources which enhance the ability of a community to work together, and to challenge each other with mutual respect, which is what we want children to do in schools and later as members of the larger community.

There is empowerment simply in the establishing of such a community within the classroom. No child should feel that the problems the world faces are his/hers alone but that by working together, supporting each other, gains can be achieved.

So that children do not feel overwhelmed by the problems that they may encounter, using philosophy in the classroom enables the discussion of the issues and the asking of hard questions as a way of solving

problems which are not necessarily their own but which relate to their own lives. Philosophy gives us the tools to work with the hard questions about society and the environment- morality, logic, metaphysics, knowledge, ethics and values.

Philosophy for children embraces many of these strategies for learning about the environment and society in the primary school, particularly the Wondering at the World material, as the title suggests. The children around whom this work is focused bring different understandings and perspectives to their natural and scientific world.

Through Kio and Gus's experiences children can explore many issues and ideas which help them understand, appreciate and value the environment. Issues related to hurting animals, the supernatural, the differences in perceptions and reality of the environment when the context changes from day to night are just a few that are posed on one page of Chapter Four.

Using strategies which involve the students in their learning will lead to them making decisions together, as a community, about how best to act to protect and improve their environment.

Many schools are encouraging active involvement in environmental issues:

* recycling committees - student who meet regularly to discuss ways of improving resources use in the school. For example, a recent Easter Bonnet parade had the theme recycling and all materials had to be second hand.
* Trees for Survival project in conjunction with the Rotary clubs - the nurturing of seeds to small trees in tubes which the children then plant out in denuded areas.
* Newsletter items - regular features and weekly 'handy environmental hints' segment.
* Requests from the school to parents to please sent notes, money, etc. along to school in previously used envelopes rather than a new one.

There are many other wonderful projects being undertaken by teachers and schools. Most are very small and make very little impact on the world's problem when considered in isolation. But when the action is driven by understanding and the ability to ask questions and work together to solve problems, the ripple effect is tremendous, with parents and whole communities becoming involved. Patterns of behaviour are being changed because the proposals for change are accompanied by understanding; the eventual impact of this work can be great.

We must be careful not to assume it is the child's task to educate the parent - this may of course happen, but the school has the responsibility of building pathways to enhance the childrens' learning which includes educating parents by involving them, including them and informing them.

I remember my own sense of helplessness when I visited Thailand a few years ago and read of the teak forest depletion and general consumption of resources in Asia. In thinking through this strong feeling I realised how we sometimes need to step outside a community to be able to realise the impact of what is occurring within that community. I possibly learnt more about Australia's environmental problems by visiting Asia, than I did about those of Asian countries.

For children too stepping outside the real world into the world of others can often shine new light on the problems that are close at hand. Perhaps it is through reasoning that we develop ideas and skills for rethinking, reusing, recycling, and replacing. Through Philosophy that we can help children build understanding and be empowered to act on social and environmental issues that confront them.

THOUGHT AND TALK

Philip Cam, University of New South Wales

Dialogue and related kinds of verbal exchange occupy a central place in the classroom community of inquiry. There are some obvious reasons why this should be so. Talking together helps to build a sense of community. It allows for a ready exchange of ideas. Dialogue, in particular, provides an excellent medium for developing the range of cognitive skills that are targeted by the program. No doubt the rationale is well-known to most of you, and I don't propose to dwell on it here. Rather I want to make some remarks of a psychological nature about the relations between thought and talk which, if correct, help to show why classroom dialogue is a natural way of helping children to think reflectively.

1. Talk and Thought

One notorious version of the suggestion that thought is connected to talk is the theory long ago put forward by the behavioural psychologist J.B. Watson, that thinking is but talking to oneself(1). On Watson's view, thinking is a covert muscular habit derived from overt speech. It is just speech shorn of its overt vocalization. Quite early on, says Watson, children develop the habit of whispering instead of always talking aloud, and under sustained social pressure they eventually come to sub-vocalise their talk as thought.

As an acquired muscular habit, Watson takes thought to occur in response to environmental stimulation and to provide a means by which the human organism readjusts to it. Thus in characteristic tone, he tells us that "we think whenever by the subvocal use of our language organization we can escape from a situation to which we are not adjusted," and that someone will continue to think "so long as there are elements in the situation (verbal) that keep stimulating the individual to further internal speech"(2).

While I am attracted to the idea that the internalisation of speech plays a significant role in the development of children's thought, there are many reasons why I would wish to part company with Watson. Let me raise just a couple of points that lead to a very different understanding of the nature of this internalization. Vygotsky(3) points out one problem for Watson's account in the fact that there is little to differentiate the *structure* of whispered speech from that of fully voiced speech, and yet much to distinguish both of these from the structure of verbal thought as reflected in the patterns of inner speech. So that, as intermediary, whispered speech leaves these structural differences unexplained. From this point of view, he claims, a better approximation to verbal thought is to be found in so-called egocentric speech. Just to help carry conviction, let me enlist the help of a four-year-old in Vygotsky's support:

> "I'm going to have a zoo field . . . now we've got more animals . . . three more, so I think we'll have a zoo field. *(Whispering)* Well, now, let's see . . . let's see how it *feels*. . . . Get this pin now--there, you see. Haven't got a cage . . . should be a zoo man as well. . . . Look, must get this zoo man, then we'll be all right. Really a farm man, but he can be a zoo man. . . . Depends what their job is, doesn't it, Dad? *(She goes off and fetches him.)* There now, you see. . . . What do you want. . . . Well, if you could look after these two elephants . . . I'll go and see about this . . . this panda. Well, all right. He squeezed out, and he got in. Shut the gate again. . . ."(4)

The passage is also suggestive of a connected point for which Vygotsky argues, namely, that egocentric speech captures something of inner speech *function* :

> ". . . the function of egocentric speech is similar to that of inner speech: It does not merely accompany the child's activity; it serves mental orientation, conscious understanding; it helps in overcoming difficulties; it is speech for oneself, intimately and usefully connected with the child's thinking."(5)

As with inner speech, egocentric speech has a self-directed regulative function concerned with the child's coming to represent the world and to order behaviour. In sum, Vygotsky maintains that while egocentric speech is not physically inner speech, from the viewpoint of both structure and function it can be seen as speech on its inward passage.

2. Thought and Dialogue

The contrast that I have been drawing between Watson and Vygotsky has fundamental educational implications. First, by pointing to the commonalities between egocentric and inner speech, Vygotsky not only supplies us with a more adequate story about the genesis of inner speech, he also provides us with a more congenial conception of the child as thinker. For he represents fledgling thinkers not as Watsonian individuals whose behaviour is being controlled and progressively shaped by environmental stimulation, but as strongly self-directed manipulators and probers who are busily engaged in placing a construction upon their world. If Vygotsky is even roughly right, then elementary educational practice based upon the idea of environmental conditioning is essentially wrong. Rather it will be necessary to begin from the children's attempts at inquiry and to provide them with opportunities for invention and discovery. Secondly, it is important to note that thought modelled on egocentric speech is also intensely subjective, presenting a world highly coloured by the child's own needs and concerns. The elementary classroom should therefore give children the opportunity to inquire into their own views and ways of thinking, and assist them to discover other perspectives and points of view. It should help them to find their way to more reflective and considered ways of thought.

This leads me at last to the use of dialogue in a classroom community of inquiry. Children entering upon formal education are already in the business of constructing and exploring their world through inner speech. To that extent these veterans of the inquiry mode come ready to internalise the model of reflective understanding that dialogue between children can provide. But the transition to dialogical patterns of verbal thought is unlikely to be achieved in the classroom unless the model is available. So an inquiry-based education incorporating classroom dialogue is strongly indicated.

Here, then, is my argument in brief: Let us assume that the basic idea about the internalisation of overt speech habits holds the key to understanding the genesis of verbal thought. And suppose that we construe this story along roughly Vygotskean lines. Then dialogical discussion in a classroom community of inquiry provides a powerful tool for assisting natural inquirers to become reflective thinkers.

NOTES

1. J.B. Watson, *Behaviourism*, (W.W. Norton & Co., 1924), Ch. 10, 'Talking and Thinking'.

2. Ibid.

3. L.S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, (M.I.T. Press, 1962).

4. J. Britton, *Introduction* to A.R. Luria and F. la. Yudovich, *Speech and the Development of Mental Processes in the Child*, (Penguin, 1971), p. 7. For comparison, consider the following passage from James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Penguin, 1968), p. 685:

> . . . that lovely fresh plaice I bought I think I'll get a bit of fish tomorrow or today is it Friday yes I will with some blancmange with black currant jam like long ago not those 2 lb pots of mixed plum and apple from the London and Newcastle Williams and Woods goes twice as far only for the bones I hate those eels cod yes I'll get a nice piece of cod . . .

5. *Thought and Language*, p. 133.

LISTENING FOR MEANING

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'Nature has given one tongue, but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak'. Epictetus.

Talking for meaning requires listening for meaning. If Epictetus were correct, we might expect to listen twice as much as we talk. Indeed, in the dialogues characteristic of a philosophy for children classroom, everyone listens very much more than they talk. Or that should be so, at least if there are more than two involved in the discussion. In the philosophy for children classroom, we aim not so much at a dialogue between two people, generally the teacher and one student, but at a conversation in which each participant - students and teacher - is engaged in listening, and occasionally propounding their ideas. The skills of listening for meaning are as much to be modelled and learnt as are the skills of talking philosophically.

Listening skills have of course been a focus of attention among social psychologists and educationalists for many years. In a very brief glance at the literature, I came across a number of illuminating models of listening. Nichols' classic discussion of listening talks of levels of listening: hearing, listening for pleasure, listening to understand, listening to evaluate, listening to remember(1). One model, given in a publication of the South Australian Education Department(2), distinguishes four levels of comprehension: the literal, the interpretative, the critical and the creative.

The South Australian model makes vivid reference to the ways young children listen. My version is not quite the canonical intended version: I use the categories to illustrate my point. No doubt we all have an image of a pre-school age child listening almost dazed to a fairy story, taking each phrase literally, as if the events were happening. The children are doing more than hearing, more even than listening for pleasure: they are absorbed in the literal sense of the story. Television takes some kids the same way, into an imaginative world quite detached from the sitting room. As children learn their way around fairy stories, or Walt Disney cartoons, they become familiar with the conventions and begin to predict what will happen, to interpret what they listen to within the context of the story. At this point children are operating at the second level - that of interpretation.

Often the process of interpretation is a difficult and elaborate one, involving the skills of predicting and understanding that - especially in Walt Disney cartoons - are far from obvious. We all know children who seem unable to interpret stories this way, who are slower than others to see the direction of the story. Similarly, I confess myself baffled by the conventions governing the cartoon serial of the Simpsons - I can never work out why things happen the way they do. Whatever the level of difficulty, however, the interpretation stays within the context of the text.

At the next level of 'critical' listening, the listener makes more complex inferences than in interpretation, inferences which may go beyond the context of the text. Critical listening involves listening for what is 'implicated' by the text, in the sense of Grice's distinction between what is strictly and literally meant by an utterance and what is implicated(3). Grice's example is of a referee for a very poor student applying for a job. The referee writes in the reference: "This student has very good handwriting". The very irrelevance of what is strictly and literally meant by the sentence will - and was intended to - alert those reading the reference to the skills the student evidently lacks. Not only is it necessary to predict and search for explanation within the context of the text - in this case, the reference - but it is also necessary to reason about what is and is not said, so as to explain the behaviour within a general theory of human behaviour. Critical listening involves reasoning in just the same way. To return to the Simpsons: the particular episode that so confused me was about a child who was in danger of flunking grade two. The critical questions I longed

to ask were: What are the criteria which decide whether you pass grade two? Should kids be allowed to think they've "flunked" grade two? and so on. They were questions, which held up the very context of the cartoon to scrutiny. To some extent, my difficulty in interpreting the Simpsons was due to how I listened: I listened critically rather than interpretatively. Critical listening, in this sense, is quite distinct from, and possibly incompatible with, interpretative listening.

It is the process of critical listening which is so characteristic of philosophy for children. When we begin to read, say, Kio and Gus we ask the children interpretative questions:
" What do you think is going to happen"?
" Who is going to tell the story"?
We also ask questions which take us outside the context of the story. We ask about the nature of stories, about what the children's own "real" names are, about who is right in the argument between Kio and Gus over whether things without tails can be proud. In asking these questions, we are modelling a way of listening often entirely unfamiliar to children, and which they frequently resent. "Just go on with the story", they may say, "and stop talking about it". In our haste to teach children to read and love books, we have often failed to teach them to be critical of what they read.

This point is reminiscent of a claim frequently made by those who advocate teaching a range of genres other than imaginative writing in the classroom(4). It has been argued that we have impoverished the range of skills we offer to children by excluding genres such as science writing from early childhood reading. On the other hand, we have tended to take the conventions of reading imaginative writing for granted: an assumption which is may be justified only for middle class children.

The very informality of English story telling conventions often mask the fact that we do not treat stories as we do other genres, even stories that do not begin with "once upon a time". Other languages have more rigid conventions which alert us to the existence of a story; in French it is the use of the preterite tense, for instance. I remember being struck by my 4 year old daughter,

then at school in Belgium, putting herself to sleep with a story in this - for me -difficult and recondite tense. As in the fashion, the story was all about herself, using not the first person pronoun, "I", but her name, Eva - her real name. I asked her why, and her response was, naturally, "But Mummy, it's a story". She understood the conventions of the genre.

In Philosophy for Children, we are making explicit not the skills of writing in a particular way and genre, but the skills of listening in a particular way. The questions we ask in the philosophy for children classroom,
"Is what you said consistent with what you said earlier?"
"Is your question relevant to the earlier question?"
"What does it mean to say that he was doing something wrong?"
are typically philosophical questions which force evaluation, and reevaluation of what is said with reference to logical criteria. The very process of asking such questions offers a model of how to listen critically - what questions to ask in your mind. In a community of enquiry, both children and teacher should bear in mind their presuppositions and the structure of their arguments. Eventually, there should be complete symmetry between the participants in a philosophy for children classroom. All participants - students and teachers - should be able to listen critically to their own and others' ideas, to evaluate and question what is written and what is said, and search for what follows, and what does not follow. That process constitutes listening for meaning.

Listening for meaning in this sense should not be conceived as the only way to listen to stories. We all value the uncritical escapism

of a good thriller - and children should be allowed the same. Listening for meaning in this sense is something, however, that should not be ruled out even when reading stories. We should not allow the conventions of the story telling mode to insulate the content. Critical listening skills may not always be exercised, but they should always be in reserve.

There is one final stage in the model of listening we began with - creative listening. In one sense, listening is anything but creative. The task of the listener is to listen to another, to concentrate on another's ideas, rather than to develop one's own. In another sense, critical listening as I have described it is a paradigm of creativity, in so far as critical listeners bring their own ideas and techniques to bear on what they hear, and hence are thinking while they listen, rather than absorbing passively. The notion of creative listening was intended, I suspect, in neither of these senses, but rather to offer an alternative to the deprecation thought to be inherent in critical listening.

The very idea of being critical has had a bad press. "Critical" behaviour is often associated with condescending unpleasantness and with rigid and narrow teaching, to an agenda divorced from the interests and concerns of the students. There are good reasons for this association. Quick witted and often shallow logical repartee is frequently a means of excluding others from a conversation, and of denigrating others' ideas, without properly appreciating the force those ideas might have. Too often, even among professional philosophers, discussion of an idea is cut short by the search for counter examples to relatively unimportant claims.

In the context of confrontational critical listening of this sort, there is good reason to look for less confrontational form of listening. One is reminded of feminist work on 'reclaiming conversation'(5), and of 'active listening' techniques derived from psychotherapeutic techniques(6). Creative listening in this sense would involve listening for what has not been said, what perhaps could never be said, and engaging the concerns of the interlocutor.

Active - or emphatic - listening techniques are techniques designed in particular to defuse conflict, and to interpret the needs of the interlocutor. In a bowdlerised form, they involve the listener in paraphrasing what has been said in such a way as to distinguish a factual and an emotional or inferential component, and then to check with the interlocutor that the interpretation is correct - the so called confirmation request. So, for instance, if a child storms into the house, charges past without saying "hello", goes into the bedroom and slams the door, the active listener will not say:
"Who on earth do you think you are?"
but rather:
"You came in, did not say 'hello' to me, went into your room and slammed your door. You appear to be angry about something. Is that right"?

I might say that I've tried this technique with little success in my house. My kids say:
"Of course I'm angry. What do you think"?
It may be a technique best suited to Southern California. The point remains, that this sort of active listening does not denigrate the interlocutor in the way, at least according to some people, critical listening can.

I think that this way of putting the contrast is a mistake. It is no straw man - there are texts which present just such a contrast(7). It is a dangerous way of presenting the contrast, since it justifies a slide to a discussion of how people feel at the expense of rigorous and critical investigation of ideas. Active listening also produces conversations of deadly dullness, in which each party repeats what the other says *ad nauseam*. Not a recipe for fun.

This is not to say that active emphatic listening does not have a role, in particular in counselling and avoiding emotional deadlocks. I wish however to reinstate critical listening against the charge that it is unfeeling, or involves denigration of the interlocutor. Within the community of enquiry produced in the philosophy for children classroom, critical listening need involve no denigration. The model of the community of enquiry is of a group in which questions - generally questions

produced by the students - are discussed objectively according to the criteria of rationality. If the teacher properly models the process of questioning, students will listen critically to others' ideas, and indeed to their own.

Of course, emotions may be aroused by critical comment. David Black in an illuminating paper on the arousal of emotion in Plato's dialogues(8) argued that Socrates, in exposing the ignorance of his interlocutors, inevitably made them angry. Indeed, when that anger, or irritation, is properly harnessed, and directed not against the person who exposes the ignorance, but instead against the ignorance itself, it is a powerful tool. The anger drives philosophical enquiry, so long as it is directed towards the issue rather than the person.

This is precisely the task set for the teacher in a philosophy for children classroom; ideally, there is no winning in finding a fault in another's argument; no opprobium in being challenged. Critical listening in this sense is not confrontational.

This sounds idealistic. In my experience, it works. Children, and adults, are liberated by the ability to listen and think critically. They derive immense satisfaction from the investigation of their ideas using the canons of rationality. It is the very objectivity, the distance from the particular personal situation that attracts children. What is more, their ideas are often immensely creative. In arguing that, say, there were no numbers before there were people, or that animals should not be kept in zoos, children are being creative. Critical listening is not just a precondition for creative thinking; it may indeed be creative thinking.

The model of listening with which we began purported to show the development of listening skills. The types of listenings as I have described them are better labelled genres than levels of listening. The literal, the interpretative, the critical and the creative listening skills, like active or emphatic listening, may be appropriate in different situations. In philosophy for children, we listen for meaning, and most often that means listening critically.

NOTES

1.R.G.Nichols & L.Stevens, *Are You Listening?* McGraw Hill, New York, 1957. See also L. & R. Huen, *Developing Skills for Human Interaction*, Merrill, Columbus, Ohio, 1975.

2. *Resource Book on the Development of Reasoning Skills*, Reading Development Centre, Education Department of South Australia, Adelaide, 1973.

3. H.P.Grice, "Logic and Conversation" in Ed. D.Davidson & G.Harman, *The Logic of Grammar*, Dickerson, Encino, 1975.

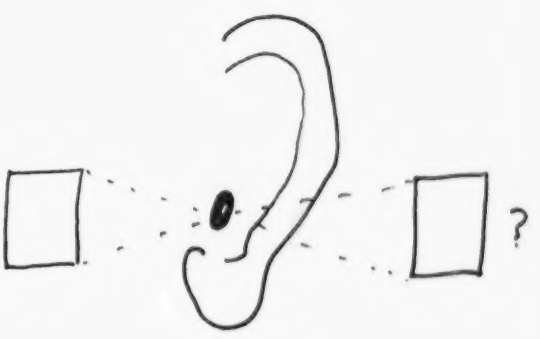
4. E.g. G.R.Kress, *Learning to Write*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982.

5. E.g. Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985, and
San MacColl, "Critical Thinking and its Relation to Philosophy for Children", Typescript.

6. E.g. Carl Rogers, Communication: Its Blocking and its Facilitation", in Ed. J.De Vito, *Communication Concepts and Processes*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1977.

7. E.g. A.Taylor *et al*, *Communicating*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1977 (especially pp.163-175).

8. D.Black, "The Arousal of Emotion in Plato's Dialogues". Paper delivered at the Australian Society of Ancient Philosophy conference, 14-7-1991.



ON THE CONTEXT OF MEANINGFUL TALK

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I want to consider the issue in terms of the context of meaningful talk. Talking for meaning involves a lot more than talk. Talking for meaning, as the process we strive for in doing philosophy for children (and all philosophy, I would hope) is quite complex.

It is useful to distinguish two ways in which talking for meaning can be considered: one might be described as a concern with the meaning of talk; and the other as a concern with meaningful talk.

So we have the question of meaning as structured by the logic of the dialogue. Then we have the question of what makes it meaningful. This moves beyond the logic of the dialogue with its emphasis on the rational and advocates an integration of the rational, personal and emotional in the community of inquiry. I will focus on context, which is important because it both provides and places the meaning of what is talked about; and I will focus on how what is talked about is meaningful because of its emotional dimension.

In doing philosophy with children or young adults we have a community of inquiry which is characterized by dialogue. One part of talking for meaning, then is to follow the logical process of dialogue. In a community of inquiry, as Lipman develops it, the aim is to produce some sort of settlement or judgement resulting from the discussion, even though it might be a partial or tentative one. The dialogue is an exchange between equals with some goal, or set of problems to be addressed, as a collaborative effort. This process is dialogical because of its structure. The inquiry has procedural rules, and in particular, logical rules. Direction is given to the process of dialogue by its logic, of following the argument where it leads.

The importance of the process of dialogue is clear enough, and the way in which it is fundamental to a community of inquiry is unquestionable. But a different sense of

"dialogue", which comes from Freire, is helpful for what I want to develop. Freire says:

> "Dialogue is the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not want this naming - between those who deny other [people] the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them".

We can think here not just of the oppressed illiterate peasants with whom Freire was working in South America but also of women who are denied a right to speak. The consequence of this is the inability to participate fully and meaningfully in the world. As Freire goes on:

> "If it is in speaking their word that [people] transform the world by naming it, dialogue imposes itself as the way in which [people] achieve significance as [people]".

This suggests a relation between words and meaning in terms of human significance. It brings out, over and above the logical structure of dialogue, and the exchange it involves, the force of dialogue as an encounter, something which happens between people. It is personal as it relates to the interests of participants. With this in mind let us move on to consider meaningful talk.

If we consider meaningful talk, a variety of examples come to mind: discussions which bring new insights, talking about something which is of immediate relevance, or the 'deep and meaningfuls' of sorting out relationships. One way of seeing how this sort of talk differs from dialogue, in the narrow sense, is in its emphasis on

expressing yourself, or 'really communicating' (something which happens in many conversations). The two factors in this I want to discuss are context and the emotional dimension.

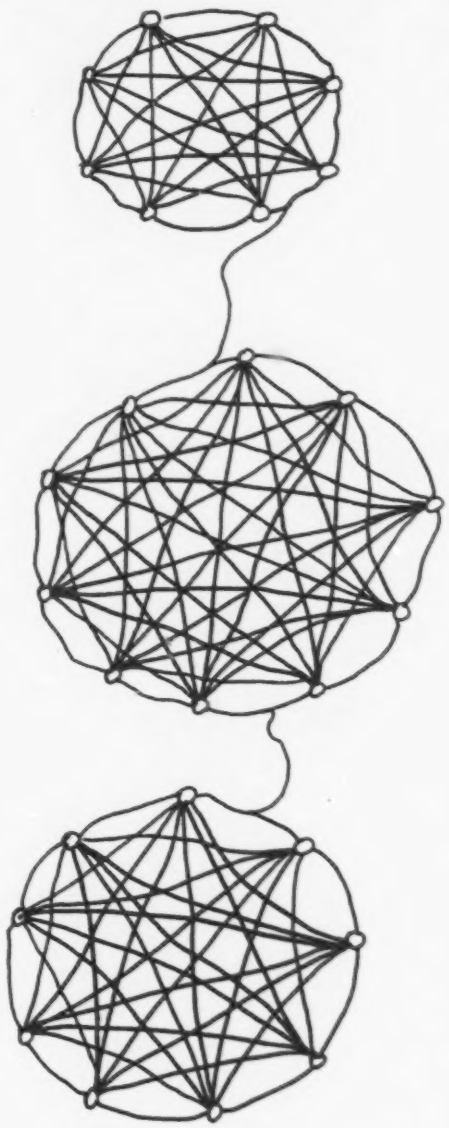
With respect to context, as Freire's work with literacy programs shows, effective education has to start where the participants are at. This scarcely requires explanation, except to point out that it can be a matter of the personal interests of participants, or a function of their situation, which is not necessarily personal. In Freire's literacy program it required starting with concepts that were relevant for the community in question.

With respect to the emotional dimension, there is a longstanding contrast drawn in philosophy between the rational and the emotional . Roughly speaking, emotions are taken to interfere with the functioning of reason. In educational theory the tradition of separating emotion from reason is well known. There is a bias in concentrating on the development of the rational part of the mind, at the expense of the emotional or any sense of the whole person. Fortunately, this is probably not what happens in many classrooms, but it is a prevalent view in educational theory. While there is clearly value in learning detachment from one's feelings in certain circumstances, there is also a significant interplay between emotion and reason which has to be acknowledged.

Martin has advocated a view of educational theory which emphasises the emotional, and the interactions between emotion and reason in educational practice. There is a need to balance development of the three c's (caring, concern, connectivity) against development of the autonomous, objective, inquiring mind. A balanced education must include educating for the reproductive processes in society with the associated goals of caring, connection and concern, as well as for the productive processes with the associated goals of rationality and autonomy. Attention to all these goals would balance educational development and give proper due to all of human experience.

To sum up, the focus on the logic of dialogue as structuring the community of inquiry reflects the bias towards the rational. Meaningful talk also involves an emotional dimension, and a close relation to the context (usually, but not always, a personal context).

The difference, then, between the meaning of talk and meaningful talk can be related to the emphasis in the one on the logical and rational, and in the other on the emotional and on the personal context. There are no doubt many contexts in which meaningful talk can occur but it is clear that conversation within the community of inquiry is a particularly useful one.



MEANING, PHILOSOPHY AND DISAGREEMENT

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1 INTRODUCTION

I have been asked to discuss the topic, 'Talking for Meaning'. Why does such a topic matter? What is the main goal served by saying what we mean? If we can clear this up, it will make it easier to give advice on the best ways to talk for meaning. The obvious answer, I suppose, is that our goal is not to be misunderstood, and this, in its turn, is important because people are likely to disagree with us unnecessarily if they misunderstand us. They may think there is a disagreement when it is merely a case of being at cross-purposes.

How, then, can philosophy as a discipline, and the Philosophy for Children Program as a particular way of teaching that discipline, help us to get our meanings clear in ways that prevent avoidable disputes? Furthermore, is there something unique about how philosophy does this that no other approach offers and yet is vital to an education in critical thinking? In this paper I will sketch an answer to these questions.

2 MEANING AND TRUTH

Just a quick aside to clarify what I will not be talking about. One role of philosophy is to examine whether the ways of deciding truth or falsity differ between different kinds of claims. How we test the truth of factual claims may differ from how we test the truth of value claims, of moral claims versus aesthetic, of religious versus scientific. The need for different kinds of tests may be due to the different kinds of meaning of these claims. For example, in Pixie, her mother remarks that Pixie is like vinegar. What does Pixie's mother mean? We may offer different interpretations but what we are trying to do is to find which interpretation is true, which we do by reference back to the text. Philosophy for Children is an excellent program for thinking about such matters but my concern in this paper will not be with meaning as the search for the true interpretation or for truth conditions.

3 VERBAL DISAGREEMENTS

People can disagree because they think one meaning of a word is intended when it is some other meaning. Philosophy for Children has lots of exercises of this kind e.g. the ambiguities in the meaning of the word 'right'. Verbal ambiguity as such, however, is not a disease with an especially philosophical cure. It is dealt with in English lessons, too. Nonetheless, there are cases where philosophy shines, such as the William James case where the man follows the squirrel as it goes round the tree. Has he gone round the squirrel? Well, he hasn't gone round it in the sense of having moved from its front to its side to its back to its side but he has gone round it in the sense of moving from north of it to west to south to east. Any disagreement over whether he went 'round' the squirrel evaporates with this kind of philosophical clarification. Or Stebbing's case of the solid table - is it really solid if it's made up of 99% space and little specks of matter scattered round? Here the philosophical skill of distinguishing two or more senses of words is vital to remove disagreement - differentiating 'solid' in the sense of 'resistant to force' from 'solid' in the sense of 'packed with matter'. Lots of practice in these sorts of cases will help children identify when a dispute is verbal although it appears factual. This thinking skill is the skill of marking out essential distinctions.

4 CATEGORY MISTAKES

Another source of disagreement is the category mistake. This is the kind of mistake made when someone says "I see the trumpet player, the clarinetist, trombonist and banjo player but where's the band?" Pixie makes this mistake when she thinks that the zoo has animals such as lions and tigers and another animal called a mammal. The Philosophy for Children Program has lots of practice in recognising this kind of error of meaning.

5 PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS

The most useful role for philosophy, however, in avoiding disagreements caused by muddles over meaning is with those words with a special philosophical element to their meaning - words like truth, reality, appearance, knowledge, belief, certainty, right, good, just, fair, ought, rational and so on. The philosophical enterprise with respect to these words is not to analyse them so as to come up with their correct meaning. Rather, it is to sensitise people to the fact that these words often mask distinctions that it is essential to recognise. Failure to do so misleads both ourselves and others, and produces unnecessary disagreements.

Consider, for example, the case of the principal of the school in Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery. He seems to hold that what is right is what some people feel is right. As a result he cannot understand why Dale persists in refusing to salute the flag. But what is right does not mean what people feel is right, and if the principal thinks this he is mistaken in a way that can have serious consequences for himself and others. Of course, what is right may be proven to coincide with what some people think is right but this would just be a contingent matter and not a matter of meaning. Similar examples can be created for all the other words I listed, some of which I will discuss below.

For example, there is a distinction to be drawn between a claim's being true and someone thinking it is or feeling it is. Likewise, just because some claims are true for me but not for you, e.g. it may be true for me that pumpkin tastes delicious but false for you, there is still a sense of true that is independent of people. Failure to recognise this distinction in meaning is the cause of much simple-minded popular relativism, and awareness of these distinctions would remove much unnecessary disagreement.

The distinction between 'possible' and 'actual' is another example. I don't know how many people seem to have believed that, just because I agreed that it's possible that there's life elsewhere in the universe, that I've agreed that there actually is such life.

The distinction between 'appearance' and 'reality' is another case. Just because something appears to me to be the case, it doesn't follow that it really is. This is part of what we mean in distinguishing the two notions. It is an important philosophical skill, though, to recognise the need to get people to specify the exact contrast they are drawing by such pairs of terms as 'real/unreal'. When someone talks of 'real freedom', 'real happiness', 'real interests', 'real self', in what sense are other freedoms, selves etc. unreal and why is the supposedly real one to be preferred? What precisely does the distinction mean?

Now, all of the cases I have chosen are philosophically controversial but the controversy does not lie at the realm of meaning. Most writers these days, for example, agree that we mean to mark a distinction between how we feel things to be and how they are when we say something is true or right or good. What they dispute is whether what we mean is justified.

The Philosophy for Children materials are full of stories, discussion topics and exercises that help us distinguish certainty from knowledge, the real from the unreal, the artificial, the fake, etc., the true from the true for me, and so on. To use these exercises well does require some philosophical understanding of how tricky these words are and that is why workshops with suitably trained philosophers are helpful if teachers are to be of maximum use in helping children avoid the disagreements that such words cause.

6 CONCLUSION

Philosophy helps us to avoid those disagreements which are essentially verbal but which the magic of language tricks us into treating as real. No other discipline gives itself this role or has developed the tools for achieving it as well as philosophy has. We see, then, that my original question is answered - there are practical and important disagreements for which philosophy is the vital and unique solution.

A Guide to the Logic in Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery

Laurance Splitter, ACER

Experience suggests that many teachers find the treatment of logical issues in **Harry** (and perhaps elsewhere) difficult or confusing. As a consequence, they may tend to bypass them in class. This reaction is regrettable for at least two reasons: (i) the development of a basic system of logic is a crucial part of **Philosophical Inquiry (=Harry).** The subsequent programs (Lisa and Suki) presuppose competence in logic; and (ii) the systematic teaching of logic in the traditional curriculum has been conspicuous by its absence. As a result, many children leave school with their powers of reasoning largely undeveloped. The reasons for its absence may have to do with the absence of philosophy itself. Philosophy for Children attempts to fill this gap.

In this session a small group worked through the major logical strategies and rules covered in the program Philosophical Inquiry (i.e. "Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery"). Topics covered included: deductive and inductive reasoning; standard form in traditional logic and the rules of conversion; the "Square of Opposition"; valid and invalid syllogisms, contradiction and hypothetical reasoning. This session did not really exhibit the features of a community of inquiry since it was mutually agreed that the presenter should explain the various logical strategies within the confines of the time available. Participants commented that the session had helped them to understand formal logic for the first time.

An Orientation to the Philosophy for Children Programme

Fred Carstens, Yarra Valley Anglican School

An introduction to the Lipman and Sharp stories and manuals and to the notion of a 'Community of Inquiry'. A talk followed by the group experiencing the process as a class.

Animated Philosophy

Peter Clarke, former producer/ presenter of OFFSPRING, ABC radio National
Jen Glaser, University of Melbourne

Over the past year Peter and Jen have been working on a project with the Australian Children's Television Foundation that was inspired by Philosophy for Children. The project involves creating animated images around the philosophical conversations of children aged between six and eight. In this workshop Peter and Jen explained how they went about developing the themes to be explored and shared some of the activities that led up to the dialogues being recorded. We discussed the process of editing the conversations and the considerations and problems connected with animating the audio track. We then previewed some of the material and discussed its potential as a means of stimulating further inquiry.

Critical Thinking and Feeling and Acting

Bob Moon, James Cook University

In this workshop a conception of critical thinking was proposed which draws upon a number of ideas developed from the work of Jurgen Habermas. The "critical" in critical thinking is related to the notion of critique, that is, the process of self-consciously and deliberately questioning assumptions and taken-for-granted practices in society. This was distinguished from problem solving, which was characterised

as dealing with problems that present themselves to us. It was also argued that critical thinking, in so far as it results in a reconceptualisation of the world, leads to new ways of acting in the world. The workshop then considered, through discussion and a video, a youth drama production "Uncover the Bright Moon". In this production young people from various cultural groups and social classes were encouraged to reflect on and critique some of their own assumptions, some of which they held in common and some which distinguished groups from one another. The production dealt with social problems of young people. The workshop led to the conclusion that critical thinking could best be developed in children and youth in situations which were not just discursive but which involved them in significant action in and on the world in which they live. The ideas considered in the workshop could be developed further by networking among interested individuals and groups.

Dealing with Taboos in the Classroom
Sandy Yule, University of Melbourne

The idea for this workshop arose during the conference in response to what seemed to be an emerging set of questions about how to deal appropriately with the more terrifying aspects of the world, about community anxieties concerning free inquiry in classrooms and about the development of the social skills of students so that more sensitive topics can be raised and discussed in a helpful way. There was a group of about twenty participants, so we spent time in identifying why people were interested in this topic. We then brainstormed a list of 'taboo' topics which formed the basis for our detailed discussion of what we thought were legitimate and illegitimate reasons for choosing to keep a particular topic off the agenda for a given class. The dominant response was probably to say that there are no topics that are absolutely taboo under all circumstances, but that there are a range of acceptable reasons for resisting the introduction of certain topics, based in sensitivity to the situation of particular students, the judgement of the teacher concerning the maturity of the class in handling personally sensitive material and the existing sensitivities of parents and the adult community. The 'blind spots' of teachers also need to be acknowledged, so that it is responsible for a teacher to refuse to open up a topic that they know they cannot face at that time. The emerging themes were the judgement of the teacher and the identification of the need for strategies for dealing properly with difficult topics. At the close of the workshop, one participant intrigued us all by declaring that we had not listed "the really serious taboo" without revealing what this was!

Developing a Sense of Self through Community of Inquiry
Jen Glaser, University of Melbourne

In this session we explored some ideas about the connection between student's interaction within a community of inquiry and their perceptions of themselves and of each other as persons. How is it that being part of a community of inquirers strengthens students' concept of themselves and of each other as persons?

We explored the idea that developing a self-concept - that is, recognising ourselves as an "I" - involves both the process of *differentiation* and *association* - of recognising our commonality with others and also recognising our own uniqueness. We went on to explore the idea that personhood also seems to be connected to something qualitative - when people talk about developing a sense of ourselves as persons they often have in mind our valuing of our personhood in terms of *autonomy* and *self-esteem* - notions such as self approval, self-worth, and empowerment creep in to the conversation. Thus in looking at the question of how participation within communities of inquiry works to strengthen students' perceptions of themselves and of each other as persons, we need to explore the development of self-concept and its connection to such things as self-esteem and autonomy.

Environmental Education

Sally Richardson, Worldwide Fund for Nature, UK

The role of environmental education in the curriculum, with a focus on tertiary institutions, and what part Philosophy for Children can play in this development.

Ethical and Political Aspects of Philosophy for Children

Laurance Splitter, ACER

Is the teaching of thinking and enquiry skills "value-free"? If it is not, what values does it involve or presuppose? Are any of these values in conflict with the values and traditions of the wider society? Does Philosophy for Children really prepare students to participate in a democratic society? And does it really build self esteem? Is the teacher's role in Philosophy for Children at odds with parental and school expectations? Do we want to build a generation of young adults who will question everything? Can we really teach children to be moral or ethical beings?

Discussion centred around the democratic nature of the community of inquiry and the importance of fostering such values as freedom and respect in the classroom. The centrality of the concept of "personhood" was also discussed. Participants expressed some scepticism over whether or not our society really wants to encourage children to be intellectually free and to think for themselves.

Evaluation of Philosophy for Children

Christina Slade, University of Canberra

In order to discuss the benefits of Philosophy for Children, we need to be able to evaluate its impact. This workshop will consider a number of methods of evaluating Philosophy for Children, including the *New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills*, some traditional psychological tests and an analysis of taped dialogues in terms of certain target types of dialogue.

Girls and Philosophy

Brenda Cherednichenko and Susan Wilks, University of Melbourne

This forum was organised to encourage discussion about the teaching of philosophy and its impact on gender issues particularly for girls. A focal part of the session was the viewing of a video of a primary teacher who encourages philosophy as one means of addressing gender issues. She suggested that philosophy helps develop both boys and girls. It requires the development of reasoning, yet values intuitive thought when supported by good reasoning. The community of inquiry model (Philosophy for Children) demands that time is given equally to all children. Philosophy builds self-esteem and with this growth in confidence there is an increase in participation. The discussion also raised questions about student's personality, previous experience and perceived behavioural expectations as relevant in understanding girls' work in philosophy and indeed the classroom.

Guided Visualization in Philosophy Classes

Sandy Yule, University of Melbourne

The aim of this workshop was to explore the use of guided visualization as a shared experience that provides a basis for the formulation and discussion of significant philosophical questions. Guided visualization involves the use of verbal 'suggestions' and the attention of participants to the imagined experience that occurs for them. This particular experience centred on an encounter with a statue of oneself, which has the capacity to prompt

attention to many aspects of our own self-image. Because people want and need to deal with any resulting issues on their own terms, it is natural for the group discussion to move towards more general questions which are nevertheless informed by the recognition of the existence of personally significant issues (if not for myself, then at least for some of the group members). On this occasion, apart from one person who had difficulty in hearing properly, participants did recount interesting and potentially significant experiences from the exercise. This led to useful discussion on the nature of 'the self' and on the requirements for the use of this kind of exercise.

Idea of Philosophy as Conversation

San MacColl, University of New South Wales

Our workshop was an introduction to the community of inquiry investigating the notion of conversation. We used as a basis short spontaneous conversations we had with a partner in the group at the beginning, and the example in Pixie Ch. 4, p. 21 which we read around the group. We explored in discussion the nature of conversation, covering general features of conversation such as the number of participants, their status, purpose, what is and is not relevant to the conversation (coughs, kicks, tone of voice, etc.). Two accounts considered were: Michael McTear, Children's Conversation, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 5: Conversation is "naturally occurring talk involving two or more participants"; and Ruth Saw, "Conversation and communication" [1962] reprinted in Thinking, Vol.2, No.1, 63: Conversation is "the spontaneous and free expression of two people sharing a common object, who are enjoying the process of making a new object, the conversation". Time did not permit discussion of the idea of philosophy as conversation which is found in Richard Rorty: Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), Ch. VIII, p.5.

'People-Sculpture' and Philosophy

Sandy Yule, University of Melbourne

Despite small numbers (five participants), this workshop achieved its aim of building a 'people-sculpture' and developing a conversation on the basis of this shared experience. The method involves the use of gesture and body posture to form a tableau which can represent a significant conception held by one protagonist. The method is suited to the exploration of conceptions that seem significant because feelings are involved, but whose precise significance is elusive. It comes from the world of drama and of therapy, particularly from the psychodrama of Jacob Moreno and the gestalt therapy of Virginia Satir. It requires a high level of commitment to succeed in using this method with a group at all, as it involves significant self-revelation and therefore the establishment of mutual trust and confidence in the group (and not least, in the leadership of the group). For philosophical purposes, the method shows a thought in a very concrete and encapsulated form. Each person will have a different perception of this expressed thought, so that the sharing of these perceptions can show very vividly the complexity of our collective mental maps of reality.

In this workshop, we were not able to develop a high level of shared understanding on which to work in the time available. We did build an image of one participant's experience of "coming into the group" which highlighted his perception at that moment. The requirement for fresh and illuminating discoveries with this method is the emergence of unconventional perspectives as counterpoint to the conventional. It was my perception that we did not journey very far from conventional perceptions in this experience, though other participants may have had another view of

this. We did have a good discussion of the method, its requirements and its potential usefulness for classroom work, though the consensus was that it was a specialized method that required a high level of preparation both in the teacher and in the class.

Philosophers as a Resource to Schools
Philip Cam, University of New South Wales

In this workshop philosophers who have worked with teachers and children will discuss their experiences. The session will focus on how philosophers and teachers can best work together.

Philosophy and Early Childhood Education
Tim Sprod, The Hutchins School

This taster session was designed to introduce Early Childhood teachers, educators and parents to the use of 'real books' (that is, books published for general reading, rather than the purpose written Philosophy for Children novels) in combination with the core methodology of Philosophy for Children, the *Community of Inquiry*. It also looked at the use of exercises drawn from *Getting Our Thoughts Together*, the manual for the Early Childhood section of the Philosophy for Children program. Teachers already have many of the skills involved in the reading of books with young children; these techniques can be extended to encourage children to think more deeply about the books and the ideas behind them. In this way, children can focus reflectively on their own thinking and the skills they use.

The workshop commenced with a sample of the teaching style, using the book *A Pet for Mrs Arbuckle* (by Gwenda Smyth and Ann James; Ashton Scholastic: 1981). This involves reading the book to the class, asking for points of interest in the book from the class (which are listed on the board) and then a Community of Inquiry discussion centred on some of the deeper ideas raised. For this book they include: what reasons are, what makes a reason a good reason and how to decide between competing reasons. The discussion continued into reflection on the teaching issues involved. David Inverarity then presented his work in the use of large, class executed paintings to approach the same aims of encouraging and practising critical and creative thinking. These paintings were drafted by children on paper, with a final version painted on a large piece of fabric. From this flowed a series of exercises involving brainstorming ideas, sorting, comparing and contrasting, logical operations, hypothesising, testing, rule making, planning, investigating values and so on. Finally, we looked at another book in some detail *(No School Today* by Franz Brandenberg; Scholastic) and surveyed a list of other books that I have used in this way.

Further work in this area should include the development and publication of suitable Manual-like material to be used with books. Both San MacColl at UNSW and Brenda Cherednichenko at Melboume University are involved in doing so. I would also like to see, once the materials have been developed, some thought given to a model for a Training Course in the use of the material. I would envisage that this would be an attractive bridge for teachers from their present methods towards Philosophy for Children.

Philosophy for Children and Mathematics Education
Lyn English, Queensland University of Technology

This workshop addressed the nature of mathematical thinking and the role Philosophy for Children plays in developing children's ability to think mathematically in solving a range of novel problems. A preliminary focus was placed on the nature of problem solving and the requirements for effective problem solving. It was stressed that knowledge and rules alone are insufficient for problem-solving

competence. Effective problem solvers need to know when and how to apply their knowledge in a given problem solving situation. They also need to adopt a flexible and creative approach to problem solving, to apply the skills of logic to many of the problems they solve, to draw inferences, generalisations, and so on. Workshop participants were shown how the Philosophy for Children program develops these thinking skills and how the many excellent activities presented in the manuals can be incorporated within the mathematics curriculum to enhance students' problem solving abilities.

Time did not permit discussion of other activities in the Philosophy for Children program that lend themselves nicely to the mathematics curriculum, such as the concepts of probability and the nature of our counting system. Participants responded positively to the ideas presented in the workshop, although one person questioned the whole notion of philosophy for children, arguing that it is too abstract for children to address their own thought processes. Needless to say, this generated an interesting and lively debate.

Philosophy and Science Teaching

Peter Davson-Galle, University of Tasmania
Tim Sprod, The Hutchins School

Despite its perceived importance, the teaching of science is the source of a good deal of discontentment, both within and without the ranks of science teachers. Sprod's and Davson-Galle's view is that introducing an element of Philosophy of Science into science teaching would assist in various ways and that the Philosophy for Children style of doing this is the best way to go. In the workshop, we walked people through the possibilities of the existing material (mostly "Harry" but bits and pieces in "Pixie" and "Kio and Gus" and rather less in "Suki") and spoke of plans to develop new material (bits and pieces already written by Sprod). Basically, what we plan is for an anthology of short stories (both purpose-written and drawn from existing literature) collected together in various bunches governed by the philosophical issues they manifest. Such a collection of stories would be "spoken to" by a manual in much the way that a Philosophy for Children novel is. We see the advantage of the anthology style of material (over the novel) to be flexibility of use. Teachers, especially secondary teachers, can pick and choose according to their judgement of students' interests, the science they're doing at that juncture, curriculum constraints and so forth. The group discussed the project's prospects (favourable, they thought) and felt that inservice education for science teachers (external mode graduate certificate?) would be a pre-requisite to its use. The project is aimed at lower secondary compulsory science education and anyone wishing to know more, be involved, offer a story or a reference to one, is encouraged to contact one of us.

Philosophy and the English Teacher

Janet Phillips, Mt Lawley Secondary High School

The workshop will focus on the importance of understanding philosophical inquiry for secondary English teachers.

Philosophy for Children Strategies in the Classroom

Fred Carstens, Yarra Valley Anglican School

This workshop addressed three questions:
What is the conventional Philosophy for Children strategy and what are its strong points and weaknesses?
How can other materials (e.g. novels) be used?
What kinds of student activity and interesting methods have a role to play?

The Conventional Strategy

(a) Reading around the group seems to present few problems. There is obviously a difficulty with weak readers but they can be asked to read a short segment. The teacher might read the start to give life to the reading.

(b) Students find the novels unexciting. There was some discussion about calling them "texts" or "stories" rather than the misleading term "novels".
c) The manuals were seen as having a host of materials from which to select. One problem identified was that it is difficult to have copies of exercises ready in advance since one can't anticipate the issues that students will identify. Some felt having overhead transparencies would be a help.

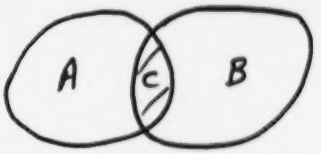
The use of other materials.
Part of a short story (The Most Dangerous Game) was read to see how the issues raised in it tied in with the issues concerning our attitude towards animals that appear in the early part of LISA. A segment of "Tuck Everlasting" by Natalie Babbitt was read and philosophical issues identified, such as the nature of ownership. It was felt that there were plenty of philosophical issues raised in such a book and that their raising was worthwhile as an adjunct to the discussion of the novel as literature. Such a book was seen as being interesting for students. Possible drawbacks were the need for a more definite intellectual structure and the need to work in a community of inquiry.

Activities and methods
Lack of time prevented much discussion but the following were mentioned: mobiles from the ceiling with challenging questions, role-play, quiet reflection and writing small groups, drawing and research.

Overall there seemed to be enthusiasm for the use of a range of materials and approaches with the Lipman materials.

Philosophy for Non-Philosophers: Free Will
Ross Phillips, La Trobe University

Are human beings free? In this workshop we will explore the nature of free will and its relation to moral responsibility.



Philosophy for Non-Philosophers: Learning Logic
Douglas Adeney, University of Melbourne

Only four people attended, but this meant that everyone had full opportunity to join in the discussion. Participants were given a sheet setting out eight items: seven arguments (which for the sake of simplicity were all syllogistic) and one bare assertion. They were invited to spot the 'odd one out', which brought out the notions of an argument, a premise and a conclusion. Some of the seven arguments were impeccable, and some had one or more failings: a false premise or two, invalidity, or a deceptive equivocation. The distinction between soundness and validity was introduced, and so (briefly) was the Venn Diagram method of determining validity. Participants were given three pages of introductory material on these diagrams, (copies available from VPCA on request) and they all seemed to be getting the idea as we applied the technique to each of the seven arguments on the first handout.

Philosophy for Non-Philosophers: Mind and Body
Robert Farrell, Monash University

What exactly is the mind? What is the relationship of the mind to the brain, body and soul? We shall explore some of these questions together.

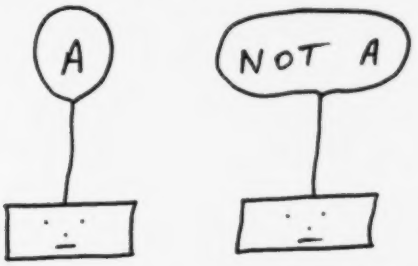
Philosophy for Non-Philosophers: Morality and Culture
Professor Tony Coady, University of Melbourne

At the present time it is fashionable to insist on the legitimacy of different cultural

outlooks on morality. This fashion often seems to assume that moral norms are entirely determined by cultural pressures. We shall examine both this issue and the question of what contribution culture can legitimately make to ethical thought.

Philosophy for Non-Philosophers: Personal Identity
Professor John Bigelow, Monash University

What is it that makes me the person that I am? Am I the same person now as I was twenty years - or even twenty seconds - ago? We shall explore these questions together.



Philosophy for Non-Philosophers: The Mind
Clive Lindop, Philosopher in Residence, Northern Territory

This workshop will focus on philosophical views of the mind using "Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery" (Chapters 3, 6).

Questioning and Thinking Skills in Visual Arts Education
Jan Boyd, Griffith University

A range of people attended this workshop which was focussed upon developing thinking skills in visual arts. The planned activities were designed to encompass basic thinking in directed activities to more complex thinking which gave ownership and artistic decision-making to the participant. The process involved the element of choice of artistic technique and personal expression. The main point of the workshop was to explode the myth that "hands on" activity means "minds off" when engaged in artistic tasks. The underlying premise in this workshop design was that philosophy interfacing the teaching of visual arts reflects the individual as a holistic being who makes artistic decisions in a very personal way based upon aesthetic judgements.

Remedial Philosophy through Puzzles, Jokes, Questions and Illusions
Father Tom Daly, SJ, United Faculty of Theology

A partial answer to the question, "What am I?" can be attempted after we have become personally involved in solving puzzles, seeing jokes and asking questions (as we will in this workshop). This gives a basis for philosophy which is as accessible to eleven-year-olds as it is to us. How much earlier should it have been provided? How much later does it remain valid?

Resources Working Group
Convenor: Jen Glaser, University of Melbourne

The resources working group met four times during the conference to discuss issues concerning the selection of material best suited to generating philosophical dialogue. During one session Matthew Lipman joined the group to discuss the pedagogical theory and organising principles underlying the manuals that accompany the Philosophy for Children curriculum. This session was audio-taped and anyone interested in listening to it should contact the VPCA. The aim of the group was to share some of the developments occurring within different states and regions around Australia (especially; new materials, resources, and approaches) and to discuss issues that are of common concern (such as the criteria by which we determine which materials are best suited to the development of philosophical communities of inquiry in the classroom).

"SALUS" - A Simulation Game in Moral Philosophy
Philip Edwards, Monash University

Demonstration of the game with workshop participation followed by debriefing and discussion about the game.

Social Justice and Philosophy for Children
May Leckie, Heidelberg School Support Centre

What exactly is Social Justice and how does the Victorian Education Ministry plan to implement Social Justice Policy? This workshop will examine some issues of social justice to which Philosophy for Children may be seen as a response, such as values which weave through the curriculum, ethical judgement, problem solving and the availability of a meaningful curriculum for all students.

***SUKI* and English Education**
Tim Sprod, The Hutchins School

The purpose of this workshop was twofold: to introduce participants to the style and content of *Suki* and its associated manual *Writing: How and Why* and to report on the use of *Suki* in Grade 7 English classes at The Hutchins School, Hobart. We commenced with a sample lesson from *Suki* Chapter 1, episode iv. We moved from reading, the formulation of questions and discussion into poetry writing and each participant shared their poem with the group. From there, we looked more widely at the materials and at some of the implications for teaching. *Writing: How and Why* contains a coherent and thought provoking rationale for the teaching of literature plus a wealth of exercises based on a wide and impressive body of poetry. I presented the results of evaluation done at Hutchins that suggested that 56% of students were wholly positive about the course, 33% were ambivalent (mostly liking some features but not others), while 11% were negative. The evaluation indicated that far and away the most popular part of the course was the discussion. We discussed these results; it was pointed out that it would be interesting to compare the liking ratings above with those of other subjects at school, but such figures are not generally available.

I don't feel that the benefits of using *Suki* in English courses are widely known; this would seem to be an area where future work needs to be done. The teachers who regularly use techniques most close to those of the Community of Inquiry are probably English teachers. While initially they often say that they can't see how Philosophy for Children differs from their own methods, my experience is that they are quick to grasp the greater depth and enthusiastic to incorporate it.

Teaching "Thinking about Thinking
Helga Rowe, ACER

The workshop will touch on three topics.
1. The importance of *thinking about thinking* for learning and personal development.
2. How can we develop *thinking about thinking*?
3. How to detect and monitor *thinking about thinking*?

The Art of Questioning
Laurance Splitter, ACER

It is no exaggeration to say that questions - from teachers and students - are the most basic tools in doing philosophy (or any other enquiry-based subject). Yet knowing the "right" questions to ask ("open" rather than "closed", etc.), and when to ask them, is no easy matter. Richard Paul has identified more than 50 "Socratic" questions which are vital stimulants to the enquiry process. This session, which was repeated due to over-subscription, examined issues relating to the power and role of questions in the process of inquiry. Open-ended questions were characterised as those for which answers are always problematic. Such questions were seen by participants as being more likely to stimulate independent thinking than those more familiar questions for which it is universally assumed that the teacher already knows the answers. The presenter challenged the view that open-

ended questions have no answers at all, arguing that the very process of asking questions seems to presuppose a belief that there is an answer (even if we can't ever be certain that we have found it). It was generally recognised that the asking of questions which probe for meaning are but one aspect of an inquiry-based teaching environment. Engaging students in dialogue is another, and of course these aspects are linked: the wonderings of both student and teacher can be translated into probing questions. The nature of "Socratic questioning" was also discussed, with reference to the work of Richard Paul's Centre for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique.

The Critical Spirit
Peter Davson-Galle, University of Tasmania

The raison d'être for the workshop was the observation that the traits characteristic of the critical thinker were not just the body of skills and knowledge constitutive of the capacity for critical thought, but included the inclination to employ that capacity. Call this inclination 'The Critical Spirit'; the two workshops on this tried to explore ways and means of getting around what I saw as some common "blocks" to this (at least at the tertiary level, and, it seemed, at the secondary, though not so much at the primary). The "blocks" I cited were:

- confusing a criticism of one's idea with an attack on one's worth as a person;
- seeing the satisfactory resolution of a discussion to be "winning the debate" as opposed to ascertaining the most reasonable view to hold on the issue;
- an unwillingness to charitably develop an opponent's view to see what might be made of it; and
- an unwillingness to seek out objections to one's own initial views.

Of the ideas floated in those groups the following come to mind (apologies for those that I can't recall). First, that the earlier one begins and the more it is the whole ethos of the school (and society) and not just the philosophy class, the better. Second, that acting, and being known to be acting, as "devil's advocate", probing whatever is advanced, helps to not just point to previously unrealised difficulties for some view but "depersonalises" such objections. Similarly, one can have people "role play" various viewpoints on an issue (both their own and those they initially oppose). In the initial stages of a thinkers' development anyway, which allows them to dispute without ego threat. Another suggestion is to have them "critique" a written work, thus making the critical task not so personally interactive. Another is to set self-criticism exercises and opposing view development exercises.

The Place of Philosophy in Secondary Schools
Ian Moore, Melbourne

PARTICIPANTS: M. Arblaster, L. Burn, P. Davey, N. Forbes-Harper, T. Godfrey, A. Gumley, J. Lawley, T. London, I. Moore (Chair), R. Tanner, C. White.

The place of philosophy in secondary schools is pervasive. Philosophical issues have always arisen as essential elements in subjects such as Art, Economics, English Expression, History, Human Relationships, Literature, Logic/Clear Thinking, Mathematics, Music, Politics, Religious Studies and Science. In some schools Philosophy per se is taught. Despite the evidence that philosophy permeates much that is taught already, the group was not prepared to affirm that philosophy therefore ought to be added to the (already crowded) curriculum in every secondary school. Philosophy was seen as centrally concerned with thinking. The development of well-honed thinking skills was accepted as important in secondary schools. It was observed that there were different approaches towards fostering such development. A claim was made that senior students too often support their beliefs with vague generalisations. It was accepted that students should be aware of the role that evidence can play in supporting claims. An advocate for the new VCE English course in Victoria indicated that it preserves a place for reasoning and argument. Some members of the group expressed the view that formal attention to logical concepts was necessary for securing adequate criteria

with which to appraise argument validity.

One participant questioned the wisdom of promoting Western logic or Western ethics in a multicultural context. In response it was asserted that while the development of thinking skills requires a context, it also requires acceptance of the notion of objectivity. Students should also be involved in thinking about thinking. This has been achieved in primary schools through the Philosophy for Children program, where young children can be seen to have developed confidence that the fruits of their thinking, their beliefs, and the beliefs of others are worth considering carefully; and that detached evaluation of conflicting beliefs (and the thinking underpinning them) is worth undertaking.

Concern was expressed that in a discipline-oriented secondary school classroom a teacher might be unwilling or unable to tolerate the level of questioning philosophical issues require. Philosophy offered as a distinct subject could acknowledge this difficulty. It was seen as unlikely that teachers (in virtually all subjects) who might touch on philosophical questions could be assumed to have received philosophical preparation. It was suggested that some secondary schools might offer, beside the discipline-oriented curriculum, timetabled slots for organised questioning and reflection under philosophical guidance. Students could be assisted in formulating significant questions that they would have liked to ask in another class. It was unanimously agreed that Post Primary Philosophy should be kept on the agenda in future deliberations concerning Philosophy for Children.

Thinking about Religion and Philosophy for Children

Marie Hungerman, University of Hawaii at Manoa

This workshop will address the child's thinking and talking about God and religion. It will examine the possible relationship of the Philosophy for Children programs and methods to religious discourse in the schools. Workshop participants will actively engage with episodes from the novels HARRY, LISA and KIO AND GUS to discover whether and how these materials might provide opportunity for appropriate discussion of religious concepts and religious experiences of children.

Thinking and Learning in Primary School

Brenda Cherednichenko, University of Melbourne

This workshop deals with the processes involved in teaching and learning for both children and teachers. From my work in schools with teachers and children, I reported teachers and children's comments, reasons for integrating philosophy into their class programs and reactions to this work. The group discussion focused on the development of children's thinking through philosophy and the professional development of teachers who had introduced philosophy. We have assumed that teaching philosophy to young children develops their critical and creative thinking skills, but the discussion also reinforced the notion that it improves the level of teaching and learning, as well as the thinking and listening skills of teachers. The results carry over into all aspects of the curriculum.

Thinking Skills in the Co-operative Classroom

Kathy Lacey, Hawker Brownlow Publications

Participants will have the opportunity to explore, and experience activities in, a range of P-10 thinking skills programs such as Philosophy for Young Thinkers, Blueprints for Thinking, Creative Problem Solving.

Thinking with Drawings

Sandy Yule, University of Melbourne

This workshop explored the assumption that our more abstract concepts can be expressed through concrete images in ways that reveal insights about the structure, connections and problematic areas of these

concepts. Nearly twenty people participated in this workshop; the central activity was to produce a fairly spontaneous drawing of "peace", which everybody was able to do. After being offered a choice of two alternative ways for people to speak about their individual pictures, the group determined on a third alternative, that I would speak first (and at length) about my picture - and that others would speak afterwards. We were able to proceed satisfactorily on this basis; it is important that all participants have opportunity to speak to their picture, both for purposes of owning the choices involved in reducing an abstract concept to a specific image (with the possibility of fresh insights from this process and from the questions and observations of others) and for purposes of revealing the normal diversity of idea that exists within any group and any abstract concept. I thought that the session was successful in demonstrating the effectiveness of the method as an approach to abstract topics that works from a concrete basis of shared experience within the group. It tends to bring to the fore some group members who feel less confident with more purely verbal philosophical discussion. It also emphasizes how different ideas do not necessarily have to exclude each other in a competition for "space"; the method teaches respect for the distinctive perceptions of each group member. Judging from the feedback that I received after this session, it seems to have been appreciated by a number of the participants.

Two Models of Teacher Education

Susan Wilks, University of Melbourne

Schools: A description of a two-day in-service model aimed at addressing what doing philosophy in the classroom entails.
Tertiary: An outline of the content and intent of the semester-long course for pre-service students and qualified teachers held at Melbourne University.

Using the Imagination in Critical Thinking

Jen Glaser, University of Melbourne

We began this session by compiling a list of different ways in which the imagination is used in the process of thinking - these were then grouped together, leaving us with three quite different ways the imagination is used:
i) *Providing form* - we use our imaginations this way in order to 'fill out' our experience - it enables us to think of something existing in the next room even though we do not currently have any experience of it being there; or it enables us to see someone as the same person today as they were yesterday, even though the two perceptions are broken in time. Our imaginations are involved in constructing the form or frame that makes thinking possible.
ii) *Breaking from form* - we use our imaginations when we step beyond our current models and paradigms to arrive at what is truly innovative. In this regard, the imagination seems to have a central role in explaining our creative capacity to break from existing forms (break from existing ways of seeing or conceiving things), thereby enabling us to gain new insight and perception.
iii) *Moving beyond the human experience* - imagination is involved when we attempt to conceptualise or understand what is beyond our own subjective *human* 'point of view'. How can we think about what scrambled eggs taste like to a cockroach? How can we form ideas about things we cannot detect (e.g., Z particles, isopins and quarks)? In dealing with such ideas our imagination is the mechanism by which we escape from the subjectivity of our own experience and seek to understand things that are outside human experience. After discussing how these aspects of imagination relate to critical thinking, we examined transcripts of children's dialogue (7-8 year olds), focusing on their use of imagination.

PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN CONFERENCE EVALUATION SUMMARY

People gave a variety of reasons for attending the conference. These included:
•an opportunity to meet with others interested in Philosophy for Children so that ideas, issues and concerns relating to Philosophy for Children could be discussed and shared.
•interest in the development and enhancement of thinking and critical thinking skills
•interest in philosophy for students at all levels, early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary
•to develop knowledge of Philosophy as part of tertiary study/research e.g. Phd.
•opportunity to develop state and national contacts in the teaching of philosophy for children

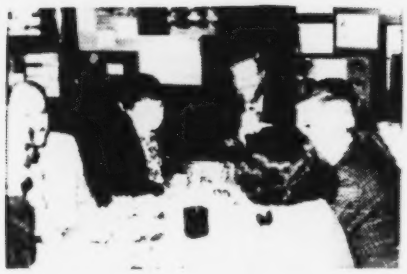
There was much positive feedback on the sessions. In general participants found the most valuable sessions were the ones where they came away with practical strategies to be used in the classroom. The demonstration of philosophy with children was valuable for many people as it was practical and convincing and gave clear demonstration of the process in action. Participants also indicated that it was valuable to have their own understanding of philosophy heightened through workshops which encouraged discussion and interaction. Sessions for nonphilosophers were useful as they gave an overview of the links from earlier to later texts and provided an excellent opportunity to engage in philosophical inquiry. Many people said it was important to hear Matthew Lipman, the creator of the program and that they found his ideas most informative. Professor Lipman's resources session was invaluable in giving an insight into texts. Sessions which focussed on teaching about thinking and thinking about thinking were useful as they were given suggestions on how to develop metacognitive skills and how to detect and monitor thinking about thinking. Teaching philosophy and thinking across the curriculum and at different levels (early childhood, primary, secondary) were seen as valuable experiences for many educators; there was a wide range of workshops offered which addressed this and the response to these sessions were very positive.

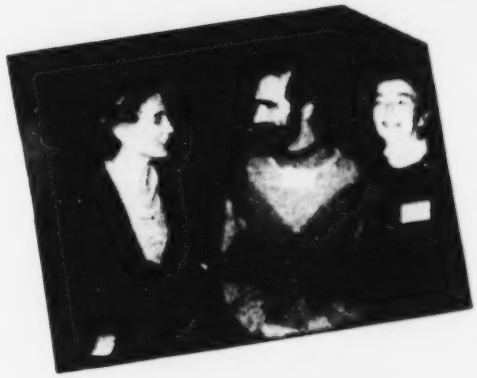
While many people found the conference well run and organised, there were many useful suggestions given that will help in the planning of future conferences. In advertising of the conference, the aim and purpose needed to be made much clearer. Many people did not know of the 'Philosophy for Children' program and there was confusion on this throughout the conference. Perhaps sessions at the beginning of the conference going through the Philosophy for Children program and materials would be useful for those who want it. It was suggested that a dual program be offered; one for novices and one for practitioners. Four days were thought to be too long; the conference fell away on the last day. This would suggest a shorter time with a tighter structure. Alternatively, some people wanted more time for exercise and for getting out and seeing Melbourne - a lot of people came from outside the state. Trinity College was said to be disappointing in many respects, from the residential facilities to the quality of the food. The dining hall was not a suitable venue for plenary sessions, with too much noise from the kitchen and very poor acoustics in general.

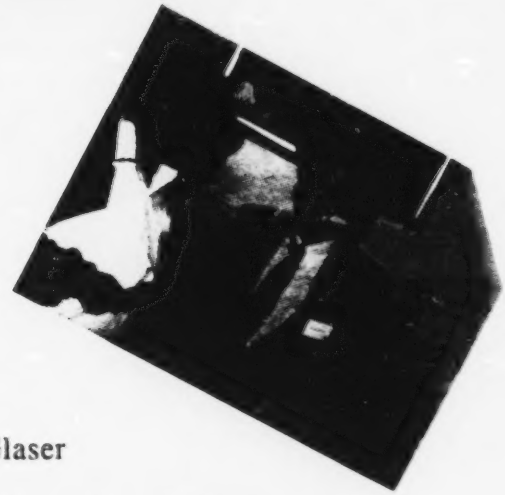
Other individual comments were:
Scope of the conference was limited by the focus on the Philosophy for Children package.
How can those involved in co-operative learning and philosophy for children co-operate?
Demonstration lesson of Philosophy for Children needs to be put on early in the program. Diversity of people from many different backgrounds enhanced the conference.
Information about Melbourne for out of town visitors would have been useful.
A well organised conference.

MEETING EXPECTATIONS:

YES	30
PARTLY	7
NO	6







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